

CONSTRUCTING VOICES THROUGH LIVED-EXPERIENCES: A
PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF NOVICE READING TEACHERS' PERSONAL
UNDERSTANDING OF PEDAGOGICAL OWNERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL
IDENTITY

A Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

It is in the best interest of the American educational system that novice reading teachers be provided with the opportunity for ownership of their pedagogy and be enabled to forge an identity that legitimize them as an integral part of the educational arena. Nurturing a teacher's critical self and critical pedagogy will address the needs of the novice reading teacher and increase our understanding of a reading teacher in the 21st century. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the ways in which five South, Southeast and West Texas reading teachers constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identity from their experiences during their novice years of teaching.

Findings from the rich and compelling stories of the participants uncovered six core themes commonly shared by the participants. Novice reading teachers experienced: (a) using prior lived-experiences to impact reading pedagogy, (b) concern for students' social, cultural, and academic well-being, (c) active reflection, (d) making pedagogical and professional connections through specific reading support systems which developed their philosophy for reading, (e) awareness of growth as a result of these systems, and (f) recognition of strengths attributing to their professional and pedagogical identity.

The six themes have implications for the novice teacher, teacher education programs, and professional trainings and trainers. To aid in forming their reading teacher identity, novice reading teachers need to look inward at their biographical stories to first know themselves and the critical incidents that have made a positive or negative impact on their literacy lives. Teacher educators should continue to evolve reading teacher coursework by weaving in current components of teacher development theory into its curriculum to aid preservice teachers in

becoming self aware of their growth and development. Professional training should be *professional*, not just something to attend arbitrarily. Professional trainers can learn from this study that training needs to be redesigned to treat the audience as active-thinking participants rather than passive receivers of knowledge. Suggestions for further research are included to help deepen the understanding of the 21st century reading teacher.

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Thank you....William, Kason, Tristan, Jocelynn.... Mom and Dad... James and Joy!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Chapter 1- Introduction.....	1
Problem to be Studied.....	2
Purpose of the Research Project.....	2
Definition of Terms.....	3
Significance of the Problem and the Justification for Investigation.....	5
Chapter Summary.....	10
Chapter 2- Review of the Literature.....	12
Teacher Change and Understanding the Novice Teacher.....	17
Mid-twentieth century through the nineteen eighties (1960s-1980s).....	18
Nineteen nineties through the early 21 st century (1990-2010).....	29
Understanding the Novice Teacher.....	43
Understanding the transition.....	44
Support systems in the first year.....	47

	Page
Voicing Pedagogical Ownership and Professional Identity.....	52
Pedagogical Ownership.....	52
Pedagogical content knowledge.....	52
Pedagogical thinking.....	55
Professional Identity.....	58
Identity through reading instruction.....	62
Critical Pedagogy and Identity.....	67
Pedagogical Ownership and Teacher Identity through Critical Literacy and Critical Pedagogy.....	73
Collaborative dialogic literacy studies	74
Teacher researcher and professional literacy learning.....	75
Connections to theoretical concepts of literacy.....	78
Chapter Summary.....	78
Chapter 3- Methodology.....	80
Methodological Framework.....	81
Theoretical Framework- Critical Pedagogy.....	85

	Page
A Structure for Phenomenological Research Design.....	85
Role of the Research Participants.....	87
Role of the Researcher.....	88
Description of Research Sites.....	89
Data Collection Procedures.....	89
Data Recording/Analyzing Procedures.....	92
Data Presentation.....	94
Chapter Summary.....	98
Chapter 4- Data Analysis.....	99
Participant Demographics.....	102
Individual Textual and Structural Descriptions.....	105
Alice’s textual description by themes.....	105
Structural description.....	118
Rose’s textual description by themes.....	120
Structural description.....	131

	Page
Angela’s textual description by themes.....	132
Structural description.....	142
Jane’s textual description by themes.....	143
Structural description.....	154
Marie’s textual description by themes.....	156
Structural description.....	168
Discussion.....	170
Composite description.....	171
The Essence.....	177
Chapter Summary.....	179
Chapter 5- Summary, Outcomes and Implications.....	181
Summary.....	181
Distinguishing Findings from Prior Research.....	184
Discussion.....	198
Limitations.....	199
Future studies.....	200

	Page
Outcomes and Implications.....	202
Implications for the novice reading teacher.....	203
Implications for teacher education programs.....	205
Implications for professional training and trainers.....	208
Conclusion and implications for researcher.....	210
References.....	217
Appendix.....	235
A- Participant flyer.....	235
B- Memory Box instruction/demonstration.....	236
C- Literacy Genealogy Tree instrument.....	237
D- Consent form.....	246
E- Participants' artifacts for Memory Box.....	249
F- Final interview questions.....	254
G- Demographic survey.....	255
H- Specific participant demographics.....	257

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Those involved in American education are aware of the growing importance this country places on enhancing reading ability among all the nation's school children. The ever increasing demand for reading proficiency has been an evolutionary process (Smith, 2002). More recently, governmental policy has raised the stakes higher for educators to reach this goal of having successful literate students (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2001). Although having proficient students is one goal of American education, having proficient and self-evaluating reading teachers is equally sought after (Hoffman & Pearson, 2000; Grant, Young, & Montbriand, 2001). Throughout this endeavor, reading advocate organizations such as the International Reading Association have taken on the role of providing an evolving set of standards to guide the developing reading teacher towards such proficiency (Hoffman & Pearson, 2000; International Reading Association [IRA], 2010). Preparing novice reading teachers for the classroom is a vital component that has been, and is being, addressed by teacher preparatory colleges, but their continuing pedagogical growth after certification and the development of a professional identity remains the responsibility of the teachers themselves. Unfortunately for many of these novice reading teachers, local school administrative programs have proven inadequate at developing a professional identity (Lieberman, 1995; Richardson, 2003). Without proper support systems, these individuals may become silenced and withdraw from the profession.

Problem Studied

It is in the best interest of the American educational system that novice reading teachers be provided with the opportunity for ownership of their pedagogy and be enabled to forge an identity that legitimize them as an integral part of the educational arena. Such opportunities can ground a teacher in developing a critical pedagogy that can contribute to a more passionate and committed individual (Kincheloe, 2005). Nurturing a teacher's critical self and critical pedagogy will address the needs of the novice reading educator and increase our understanding of a reading teacher in the 21st century.

Purpose of the Research Project

My interest in novice reading teachers led me to explore the ways in which five South, Southeast, and West Texas reading teachers constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identity from their experiences during their novice years of teaching. This inquiry was guided by the following questions:

1. What was the essence of being a novice reading educator for these participants?
 - a. How have the participants constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development from their experiences during their novice teaching years?
 - b. How have the participants constructed personal understanding of their professional identities from their experiences during their novice teaching years?
 - c. What critical incidents have occurred that helped shape their pedagogy and identity?
 - d. Did the reflective descriptions reference any form of critical pedagogy?

2. How did this phenomenological research experience impact their identity and pedagogical ownership?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms and explanations will be referenced.

- Critical incidents: essential events or people that an individual encounters that may result in changed behavior or evolved conceptual understanding (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994). Essential events include but are not limited to professional development training that may be conducted by district/local/regional/national workshops, conference participation, specific self-help pieces of professional literature and/or official or unofficial mentors. These essential events are viewed as change agents for individuals.
- Critical pedagogy: making quality decisions based on the process of reflection, action, and reflection (praxis) for the betterment of learning for oneself and others.
- Essence: “That which is common or universal, the condition or quality without which a thing would not be what it is” (Moustakas, 1994 p. 100). It is an understanding derived from the total experiences of a group which help the reader connect emotionally and cognitively to the individuals who have experienced that phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).
- Literacy: socially interacted discourse involving reading, writing, speaking, and listening to create a situated understanding. In addition, this meaning of literacy also includes the ways “of thinking, believing, feeling, valuing, acting/doing and

interacting in relation to people and things” as ways of becoming part of a Discourse community (Gee, 1989; Knobel & Lankshear, 2007, p. 3).

- Novice: two to five years of teaching experience.
- Pedagogy: The art, style, and knowledge of teaching one’s chosen field of specialty.
- Praxis: a reoccurring involvement with learning or developing a theory, applying said theory, evaluating, reflecting and then re-theorizing to improve or reform classroom democracies (Kincheloe, 2003; Schon, 1983).
- Professional development: Support systems designed to enhance and evolve a teacher’s content knowledge and/or pedagogy.
- Professional growth: a personal awareness where advancement in pedagogy and professional responsibilities has occurred.
- Professional identity: “as an ongoing and dynamic process which entails the making sense and (re)interpretation of one’s own values and experiences” (Flores & Day, 2006, p. 220).
- Reading teacher: one who teaches reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. According to the *Standards for Reading Professionals*, “Pre-K and Elementary Classroom Teachers are professionals responsible for teaching reading and writing to students in either a self-contained or departmentalized setting at the pre-K or elementary levels. These professionals may also be responsible for teaching content such as social studies or science. Regardless of their role, these individuals must be able to provide effective instruction for all students in the classroom, from those who struggle with learning to read to those who need

enrichment experiences” (International Reading Association, 2010). For this study, only teachers of grades three through six will be referenced.

Significance of the Problem and the Justification for Investigation

Affecting the future in our society requires teachers to first realize how much influence they truly hold. On the outside it may look like the teacher has very little power over pedagogical decisions and classroom democracies, but teachers are only as strong as they demand and prove to be. Giroux (1993) discussed that “we [as educators] should transform [teaching] into an emancipatory practice that provides the conditions for us to speak and be taken seriously” (p. 369). Literacy is a vehicle to channel this transformation even for the teacher. It is an “emancipatory practice” that can be used to develop pedagogy and ownership through reading, speaking, and listening to the diverse perspectives held by the teacher and those within their discourse community.

By looking within, around, and outside our cultural boundaries (i.e., self, family, classroom, or community), Giroux argues that it is our personal narratives that begin to connect identity and literacy together and “reconstructs teachers as intellectuals” (p. 369). When this occurs one can begin to speak “with” others instead of “for” others which develop the necessary knowledge and skills needed to become socially empowered and to live within a society instead of outside it. When this point is reached, critical literacy (within critical pedagogy) has been developed. Giroux also argues that to develop critical literacy, the image of public schools and institutions as “instructional sites” must be altered because they have the potential to offer and provide so much more to our society through accepting and promoting social literacy and its multimodal possibilities for

developing active, instead of, passive learners—even if the learning is done by the teachers themselves.

This transformation begins with the teacher. When teachers develop pedagogy through researching themselves and finding their identity, they can teach differences within a society and apprentice the students to be critical of their role in the future. Professional growth support systems, when viewed as change agents, allow transformation through literacy learning to be nurtured, not merely a mirage for a “one-size fits all” training exercise that only encourages mimicking and surface level application for literacy instruction (Kincheloe, 2005, pp. 21-23; 110-111).

Professional growth resulting in reading teacher change has multiple lenses and has been described and used in many different ways. Richardson and Placier (2001) positions reading teacher change in terms of “learning, development, socialization, growth, improvement, implementation of something new or different, cognitive and affective change, and self-study” (p. 905). They have documented many trends in reading teacher change referring to Chin and Benne’s three main strategies for teacher development: empirical-rational, normative-reeducative, and power-coercive. Richardson and Placier argued that for much of the past one hundred years, teacher development has been conducted through an empirical-rational model. This model has the notion that teachers are passive consumers of knowledge and are not the decision makers for their continuing development as professional educators. This was the mirroring ideology that went along with educating the masses and could be seen in the style of classroom instruction. Classroom practices then began to evolve into the social construction of knowledge, but teachers’ pedagogical growth did not seem to take this same course.

Schools were, and many are, still using a “direct-instructional” approach (the empirical-rational model) for continuing the development of teacher knowledge.

Shortly after classroom practices began to take a naturalistic approach, Richardson and Placier (2001) began to notice a directional change towards the second strategy, the normative-reeducative strategy (mainly out of proven failure of the empirical-rational model in schools). This model followed a larger constructivist movement that began studying how individuals make meaning through self-reflection and socialization. A focus on the individual was found in the classroom, and professional growth models were beginning to align with this same approach. Using such a naturalist format encouraged dialogue and collaboration. Much of the research that Richardson and Placier found concentrated on individual reading teachers and the factors that contributed to growth. It appeared that some teachers were becoming aware of the need to begin “practicing what they preached” to their students in relation to literacy and socialized learning. With such a progressive movement forward, environments where teachers can begin to take ownership of their learning outcomes can be nurtured.

Change cannot happen overnight, so for current novice reading teachers, the term hybrid seems to fit as they would need to be able to evolve critically and rise to the challenge of creating the identity for what 21st century teachers should become while still battling the nuisances of an outdated educator identity. Being a 21st century teacher not only requires teachers to move away from a teaching methodology that sets limitations for learning, but to also remove boundaries around their own professional learning to develop a more critical, reflective, transformative pedagogy created through self exploration (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Kincheloe, 2003; 2005). An important factor

to highlight is that ownership and identity yield investment. This investment may have a correlation with longevity of their professional teaching careers. The dropout rate for teachers has been rising over the past decades and the root of the problem can be addressed through looking more closely at the teacher and how the field of education acknowledges his/her presence (Archer, 1999).

Millard (2003) uses Dan Tapscott's (1999) term 'the net generation' to explain that "modern 'kids' are spending their early years in an environment that differs fundamentally from that of their parents [as well as the teachers]" (p. 5). This new generation of learners requires a new generation of teachers to teach them. In a postformal era of learning the teacher must come out of the "cave" of comfort; s/he must "leave the safe harbors" (Carlson, 2002, p. 196) of teaching to a set of students that no longer exists and open up the spectrum of meaning-making for literacy to be multimodal in nature (multimodal referring to many uses, purposes, and instances for using literacy). Additionally, it provides the catalyst for taking ownership of one's pedagogy and developing a meaningful identity (Kress, 2003). This fundamental thread holds together the issue of cognitive development for teachers (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Freire & Gadotti, 1995; Giroux, 1993; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004).

To develop a more critical student, a responsibility for developing the critical teacher must be taken. Carlson (2002) argues that our society is transcending from a banking system of learning towards a more global, useful meaning-making model and teachers need to be the leaders in reflective learning. He describes that "people are moving beyond mythologies that represent education in terms of the transmission of a

corpus of knowledge to receptive students, and more in terms of the process by which knowledge or truth is actively constructed – that is, the reasoning process” (p. 180).

A lens that this study takes revolves around the literature that supports the development of a 21st century teacher of reading instruction which focuses on the transformation of a teacher that views him/herself as a researcher of self and pedagogy. The evolution of such a teacher comes with experience and an acceptance that learning is a continuous process. For instance, P. David Pearson (2007), in a conference presentation, described this evolution into a form of critical pedagogy as following Snow’s Continuum of Knowledge which explains a reading teacher’s growth as one which moves in and around forms of knowledge and experience acquisition. The continuum begins at the level of “declarative knowledge” –the knowing of something, and then moves back and forth through the following levels as a reading teacher obtains experiences with teaching reading. Reading teachers continue to interact with these knowledge bases throughout their career: “situated knowledge” –the use of knowing something; “stable knowledge”- becoming comfortable with the knowledge; “expert knowledge” –the knowing how, why, when, with whom, and under which conditions to use this knowledge; and ending with “reflective knowledge” –putting theory and practice together to problem pose and problem solve. Self awareness processes such as these assist in developing a reading teacher for the 21st century, but how are these experiences specifically impacting novice reading teachers’ professional growth and which types of critical incidents are occurring to create ownership and identity?

Exploring the life-stories that novice reading teachers had about their developing identities as evolving professionals highlights a multiplicity of benefits (Clandinin &

Connelly, 1986; Kelchtermans, 1993). This exploration can influence those responsible for teacher development to do further investigation on critical incidents that satisfy the needs of the novice reading teacher. This research connects to the importance for various support systems as vehicles of change and their ability to create a space for novice reading teachers to develop a voice regarding their own pedagogical growth. Additionally, it adds to the understanding of professional longevity and commitment. With too many teachers leaving the profession before they begin elevating up the ladders or stages of development, it is apparent that the rungs and steps need to be redesigned and fitted with specific critical incidents so that these teachers reach their goal and see the gratification that self-identity and belonging can contribute to their classroom democracies and pedagogy. For this transformation and development of ownership to occur, not only does the individual reading teacher need to become aware of her/his identity, but the entire field needs a new understanding for what it means to be a reading teacher (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005). Hoffman and Pearson (2000) set forth a reading research agenda to help increase the field's readiness in meeting the challenges of teaching reading in this millennium. They urged individuals in reading teacher education to invest time and effort into inquiring just who this 21st century reading teacher is and what s/he needs, so to better equip our classrooms and society to handle an evolving system of change.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I called for the need to explore how reading teachers nurtured their identity and pedagogical development during their novice years of teaching so to increase the field of education's understanding of a reading teacher in the 21st century. I listed definitions to terms that will be used throughout the study and presented the significance

and justification for exploring the ways in which five South, Southeast, and West Texas reading teachers constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identity from their experiences during their novice years of teaching. The following chapter will review the literature related to two areas of interest for this study: *Teacher Change and Understanding the Novice Teacher* and *Voicing Pedagogical Ownership and Professional Identity*.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

“Most approaches to inservice planning are, as a friend of mine puts it, like administering a non-specific antibiotic to the whole population. No one knows what the germ is, or which teachers are suffering from the disease, so the medicine is administered indiscriminately to everyone.”

-Heidi Watts, 1980, p.9

As reading instruction continues to move forward, taking a look to the past reveals interesting patterns of instructing children that mirror patterns for instructing teachers (Grossman, 1992; Lieberman, 1995). Around the turn of the 20th century enrollment in public schools increased dramatically. By the end of the First World War, the need for these students to learn how to read increased exponentially (Grant et al., 2001; Smith, 2002). Educational settings were industrial in nature and classrooms took on an “assembly-line-like” atmosphere. The ultimate goal then was to teach students how to read and write at what today would be a very superficial level. The war highlighted the importance for improved reading instruction as soldiers were having difficulty reading basic informative manuals. Education found itself in a need to “educate the masses” (Smith, 2002). The ensuing years brought heightened demands from anxious government officials for educational reform. A national concern for more critical abilities to be developed in reading instruction created opportunities for reading researchers to evolve and explore reading instruction practices and theories (Pearson, 2002). Additionally, the need for change in reading instruction has inspired policy and programs over the years such as The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, The Right-to-Read Program in 1974, A Nation at Risk in 1983, Goals 2000 in 1989, No Child Left Behind in 2000, and the National Reading Panel in 2000 (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1999;

McGill-Franzen, 2000; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Education Goals Panel, 1990; National Reading Panel, 2000; Pearson, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

Teacher development has found itself following a similar pattern to that of students to achieve improved teaching skills (Bullough, 2001; Richardson, 1990; Richardson & Placier, 2001). Teacher populations began small in the 20th century. These educators stayed in their classrooms for a longer period of time to learn from their own teaching and to travel the professional growth highway at a leisurely pace almost unconsciously. As the student population grew, so did the number of teachers to educate them. American education had to educate the masses once again—this time the teacher was the student. If we compare the same timeline that curriculum took to develop critical thinking abilities for students, we will find teacher development has reached a point where a transmission of surface level knowledge found in professional trainings is not enough (Bullough, 2001; Chin & Beene, 1969; Lieberman, 1995; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Watts, 1980). Along these same lines, during the period of the 1970s through 2000, reading teacher preparation programs addressed the need to evolve as it moved from a philosophy of “training teachers” via accumulation of learned skills toward a philosophy of “teaching” teachers based on teacher beliefs, processes of teacher learning, and student achievement (Hoffman & Pearson, 2000).

Although there was a call for change, Lieberman (1995) and Richardson (2003) found that many in-service training sessions, or professional development, still prescribed to an “assembly-line-like” approach found in the early to mid-20th century for training teachers. Such an approach took away the need for the teacher to learn about curriculum

development, took away the resourcefulness of problem-solving, and created an unimaginative environment for the novice teacher (Kincheloe, 2005; Schon, 1983). Such an environment can lead to disappointment, frustration, and doubt about their chosen profession many times resulting in withdrawing from the profession all together (Archer, 1999; Hoffman & Pearson, 2000). With such an early withdrawal, these teachers lose opportunities for creating ownership of their pedagogy and an identity as a contributing member of their discourse community (Berci, 2006; Gee, 1989; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005).

Professional development must be ignited and accelerated to independently tailor growth for the individual teacher (Lieberman, 1995). Furthermore, professional development and teacher growth must meet the challenge of creating a symbiotic relationship. Such a relationship would cater to the needs of the audience creating a space where potentially exceptional reading teachers develop voice and ownership for their own learning (Gee, 1989). Throughout this professional capital building process, professional development must be viewed as an agent for change from both participating individuals to facilitate the type of growth needed in teachers of the 21st century (Carrington & Luke, 1997). It is vital that the teacher be a pivotal component in this transaction, “reading teacher education models must be directed toward the development of empowered teachers who are in control of their own thinking and actions” (Hoffman & Pearson, 2000, p. 37). They must be metacognitive about their position throughout their career. It is not enough for teachers to be two dimensional in regards to their trajectory; they must be three- dimensional and fully aware of their global position, or space, in their

career to succeed (Bullough, 2001; Kansa'nen et al., 2000; Kincheloe, 2005; Shulman, 1987).

This review of the literature identifies the foundation for a study about the ways that novice reading teachers constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical ownership and professional identity. This review includes literature from the following three areas:

1. Literature about stages of teacher development, growth, and change that lay out characteristics that more clearly define the novice teacher.
2. Literature about teachers that take ownership and create identity of their own pedagogy which may also include but is not limited to critical pedagogy exploration.
3. Literature from studies relating to critical incidents such as support systems, literacy training events or professional development that viewed its purpose as a change agent for professional learning for novice reading educators.

The purpose of this literature review was to uncover the research outcomes of practices or applications relating to the purpose of the study. The goal was to critically analyze the literature to identify strengths, weaknesses, and gaps. The following questions were used to determine the relevance of the literature to this research study:

1. How have stages of teacher development evolved to better understand the novice teacher? Studies were included in this qualitative review if they met each of the following criteria:
 - A. Documented evolution of the stages of teacher development
 - B. used novice reading teachers as their main participant

- C. used a “stage of development” theory
 - D. was written in English and was done in a country where English is the first language.
2. In what ways have researchers studied the novice reading teacher’s perceptions of professional identity, pedagogical ownership, and their critical pedagogy? Studies were included in this qualitative review if they met each of the following criteria:
- A. Used novice reading teachers as their main participant who taught elementary grades
 - B. investigated perceptions of teacher growth for the participants
 - C. reported conclusions relating to some or all of the following: identity, pedagogical ownership, development as a change agent and/or critical pedagogy, and
 - D. was written in English and was done in a country where English is the first language.

Data Collection

The goal of this review of literature was to collect an exhaustive set of relevant articles. The following steps were suggested by Boote and Beile (2005):

1. Begin with an electronic search of academic databases and the Internet. Records were kept of the date of each search, the databases searched, the key words and keyword combinations used as well as the number of records resulting in each search.
2. The next step was to search the references of the articles collected for relevant pieces. This step was repeated until a saturation point has been met.

3. A list of references was shared with colleagues and experts in the field to determine if there are any missing relevant articles.

Once a master reference list was created, a more detailed reading was executed to separate the more relevant articles from those that are weaker.

Organizational Design of the Review of Literature

The heart of the two sections of this literature review, *Teacher Change and Understanding the Novice Teacher* and *Voicing Pedagogical Ownership and Professional Identity*, revolved around the idea of change and ownership of the novice reading teacher. A limitation with this review rests on the fact that much research has focused on the teacher in general not specifically looking at grade level, content, or years of experience (Richardson & Placier, 2001). With this in mind, the first section critiqued literature from a general historical perspective and then narrowed into addressing the novice reading teacher where permitted. The second and third sections brought together commonalities in findings and discussed elements that laid the foundation for exploring the ways novice reading teachers constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identities including how literacy professional development played a role in this endeavor.

Teacher Change and Understanding the Novice Teacher

“Teaching is primarily an unstaged occupation . . . as the occupation of teaching lacks a professional ladder where, through a sense of promotions, individuals can gain status and recognition.”

*-Violet Allain,
1985, p. 2*

Mid-twentieth century through the nineteen eighties (1960s-1980s)

Concerns about the evolving learner have been in philosophical discourse for as early as one can claim to have been a tutor for such learners. American education following the turn of the nineteenth century embarked on a movement leading to remarkable changes in how education saw the grade school learner (Dewey, 1938). Beginning in the late 1960s, educational theorist began to see a parallel between the student learner and the teacher “as a learner” through exploration of the learning patterns of the adult and their life needs (Bloom, 1956; Erickson, 1956; Kohlberg, 1969; Maslow, 1943). It became clear that this information was not just vital to educational reform, but that patterns of adult learning and the stages one travels through during their lifetime were essential for this improvement (Glassberg & Oja, 1981). The improvement sought after derived from the changes the teacher encountered and endured over the course of a career (Burden, 1982; Fuller, 1969; Glassberg & Oja, 1981; Katz, 1972; Watts, 1980).

Studies during this time narrowed in on identifying concerns that the teacher developed during each stage of his/her professional life. Fuller (1969) grounded these theories by exploring the concerns of prospective teachers and positioning them with the overall continuum of the professional life of a teacher. At this time, little research was available to bridge this gap. What was available simply stated what concerns these individuals had, but did not indicate whether these needs were being met or how to meet them. Criticizing the literature for being too restrictive in response options for teachers surveyed or having too large of a population to really focus in on the individual, Fuller’s own work laid down a path for future instruments to be created that could gage concerns with stages of their career and to inform development of trainings.

Researchers of stage theory found that beginning teachers are very egocentric. During the student teaching semester, they are concerned with survival and creating control for themselves. Fuller confirmed this data with the few previous studies which corroborated this conclusion not just for student teachers but also for first year in-service teachers. From her work, Fuller clearly defined differences the novice teacher had versus the more mature teacher who was more concerned with the pupil and meeting their needs. At this point in time, the knowledge that teachers were traveling through distinct stages was being confirmed, but how they advanced was still unknown.

Following Fuller's work, varying stage names and amounts of stages evolved. Each with a common thread revolving around meeting the needs and concerns found in the pre and first year (i.e., stage 1, beginner, survival, pre-teaching), second through fourth years (i.e., novice, early teaching, consolidation, middle, adjustment), and the fifth year and beyond (i.e., late teaching, master, mature, mastery) (Burden, 1982; Christensen, et al., 1983; Fuller, 1969; Huberman, 1989; Katz, 1972; Watts, 1980). The intended outcome for these studies was to provide more guidance and structure for professional development that could tailor its content to meet these needs of the general educator. As a result, a more detailed collection of literature that not only studied the concerns teachers had, but provided advice on how best to use this information for training teachers followed.

In her own work on concerns of preschool teachers, Katz (1972) focused on outlining a specific set of concerns which included suggested training tips. She advocated that during the "survival" stage, training should be onsite and designed to meet the technical or managerial needs of the school environment. During this stage, teachers are

worried about themselves and if others view them as capable. As they progress through to the next stages (consolidation), there is a gradual release of control and it becomes more pedagogical in nature as they are now capable of focusing in on the students needs. They want to meet with colleagues and join in this discourse community. Katz suggested that trainings should still remain onsite, but be guided by specialist or advanced colleagues. She found when teachers reach the third or fourth year (renewal stage); they begin to see the advantages of taking risks in teaching and trying new things. They seem to want to be involved with the community of education by attending conferences, workshops, or reading professional literature. The final stage ironically returns to the ego. In line with other stage theorist of this time, by the fifth year if teachers have been meeting their concerns along the way, they are viewed as mature—not necessary exceptional, but in control of their teaching. They once again are concerned about themselves but in relation to developing their philosophies and making a change or niche in education.

What seems very evident at this time in stage theory history was the absence of the teacher knowing this information for him/her selves. It is quite clear from the studies, that theorist believed new teachers were not capable of obtaining pedagogical ownership until they had advanced and concerns shifted (Fuller, 1969; Katz, 1972). Additionally, personal knowledge about the stages one goes through was nonexistent on the teacher's side, as was any teaching of this information to them. The literature's audience was the college educator program, administrator or staff developer – not the teacher. Those in charge of teachers were to be privy to this information about their teachers so that they could provide what was needed. Borrowing from the 1989 movie *Field of Dreams*, this perspective metaphorically resembled the idea of “if you build it they will come.” The

feeling drawn from this literature was that if training was provided that met the needs of the teacher, they would relish at the opportunity to grow. This interpretation can be supported by Chin and Benne (1969) and their analysis of change systems. Professional development then (and predominately now) followed an empirical-rational model. Using this type of change agent, it was assumed that since they are rational human beings, it was then further assumed they would logically see the need and best interest of the change agent being proposed. They would want to continue down the prescribed route for the good of themselves. In-service training seemed to glide on an “information-giving” track, rather than “information-processing” and cognitive awareness. As mentioned previously, the missing variable was the teacher. Chin and Benne referred to this missing element as the “people” technology. It was this missing element that made (and makes) this form of development or change ineffective. Fuller (1969) referred to this problem as a “stuck” teacher or one that was not conscious of the concerns so therefore stayed motionless in development (p. 220). The question then becomes obvious: Was the stalemate an unconscious decision, conscious decision, or was it a reaction to an outside assumption of control? The cure does not merely lie in knowing the solution, but having buy-in and awareness of the need from the consumer to partake in the change (Duffy & Roehler, 1986).

Stage theory knowledge did seem to be one of the missing links to educational reform for this time. Understanding the concerns of teachers was fundamental to refocusing attention to where teacher development needed to be which was on the teacher. For advancement in this area to occur, the teacher needed to become involved. Aware that teacher education programs and professional development were yielding poor

results, Glassberg and Oja (1981) took a different route of stage theory and explored teacher growth through a cognitive-developmental perspective using ego, moral, and conceptual growth as forces for evolution and to promote personal and professional growth of in-service teachers. Her work relied heavily on philosophies of Dewey, Kohlberg, and Piaget which she argued supported grounding learning experiences with personal growth through gravitating up a cognitive problem-solving ladder.

Glassberg and Oja (1981) focused on the need for teachers to become cognitively aware of curricular, pedagogical, and student needs to create an environment for not only teacher growth, but for student growth as well. Her model of professional cognitive development suggested that teachers who function at a higher stage of cognitive development created atmospheres that supported higher level thinking for students.

Cognitive thinking connected with stages of teacher development did not just focus on concerns that teachers have, but on helping teachers become aware of problem-solving techniques to move past the concerns and advance their career (Glassberg & Oja, 1981). Furthermore, Glassberg's work brought the concerns of the teacher into the realm of cognitive development by placing emphasis on personal and professional growth through the levels of thinking rather than years of experience. Unknowingly, this route of adding the "people technology" into professional development contradicted stage theorists of this time who explicitly advocate that the beginning teacher is not capable of taking this route due to the concerns of the "self" and survival (Fuller, 1969; Glassberg & Oja, 1981; Katz, 1972; Watts, 1980).

By the nineteen eighties, Stage Theory based on concerns of the teacher was widely accepted shifting research in the direction of crafting trainings to match these

concerns (Burden, 1982; Christenson et al., 1983). Adding to the body of information on teacher career stages, Burden (1982) presented his perspective of development through the stresses that a teacher encounters throughout their career. Each of his three stages correlates to stresses that pertain to two areas: one- job skills, knowledge and behaviors, and two- attitudes and outlooks. Each of these must be traveled before the other can be encountered. These areas are presented as follows:

1. Stage I, or the survival stage, had stresses due to the limited knowledge of teaching methods, procedures, children, professionalism, and curriculum while having attitudes of inadequacy and unwillingness to try new things. These teachers are referred to as just teaching content rather than children as they are very focused on themselves and finding their place.
2. Stage II, or the adjustment stage, teachers are more comfortable with their space in education as they are gaining confidence with their pedagogy and are able to see more complex solutions to problems with teaching and with the children. Stresses become manageable.
3. Stage III, or the mature stage, teachers begin to create their own image of teaching that is based off of their confidence in teaching methods, procedures, child knowledge, professionalism and curriculum. They have gained insight into the complexities of these elements of teaching and require very little guidance (pp. 10-14).

Much of his focus throughout his studies revolved around the student teacher and first year teacher. Throughout this literature, helping teachers get past the first year was a top priority. With the knowledge about the release of stress/concerns and ease of teaching

connected with stages II and III it was assumed that these advanced teachers did not need as much attention as the survival stage teachers.

In keeping with previous scholars' descriptions of stage theory, studies like Burden's reiterated this information in their literature reviews validating each other's outline of teacher developmental stages and usually tweaking the stages by adding a new level or changing a name (Allain, 1985; Burke, 1985; Christensen, et al., 1983; Easterly, Williston, & Allen, 1982; Watts, 1980). An additional example would be Watts (1980) and her work on using stage theory to better equip teacher centers to develop assistance for teachers. Adding her own claim to this field of study, Watts investigated best ways to help teacher advance through these stages by presenting teacher vignettes she collected in her research that describe feelings and actions for each of the three stages: survival, middle, and mastery. In her pursuit, she based her suggestions for teacher change on Kohlberg's triad for advancement. Watts focused on associations (having a role model), experience (providing hands-on opportunities rather than lecture), and reflections (not just personally but collaboratively). Through the vignettes, she presented images of the concerns rather than listing them arbitrarily. Examples of these stages are as follows:

Survival: "My whole concentration was on me –how good I'd have to be to do anything. I thought I had to do all the preparing and performing."

"Mannerism is what I remember most. I felt inadequate and scared. I used the desk between them and me: I stood right behind it."

Middle: "I began to feel good enough so I could talk to some other teachers. I began to get some sense of the order of the day. I didn't have to keep looking it up."

“When I’d taught the whole lesson and there was still half the period to go, I had to let some of “me” creep in. When I discovered that I could be more myself, and that the kids liked that, I began to feel better.

Mastery: “Mastery is planning in half an hour something that looks as though it took two weeks when you do it.”

“When everything you teach connects with everything else you teach . . . a true sense of wholeness.” (1980, pp. 2-6).

Researchers at this time brought three factors into the equation of teacher development through stages. First, teachers like child learners are always in flux. They grow and learn at different rates and through different experiences. This would make it extremely difficult to plan training. At this time, the novice teacher was not the audience for disseminating this information. It was up administration to know this information and to know where their teachers are in relation to the stages (Watts, 1980). Additionally, these suggestions are blanketed for all teachers in all subject areas. Watts mentioned that some teachers may have a sense of where they are in their professional development and that their own reflection was the best way to recognize advancement, but that this awareness usually comes from those teachers who have past the survival stage. Secondly, Watts (1980), Burden (1982), and Fuller (1980) mention that these stages are ones that the “average” teacher would travel if they have the “average” concerns. Nothing was said about what to do for the teacher that gets “stuck” and does not progress through the stages normally. It is mentioned that further study into this occurrence was warranted, but for the time literature referred to those that are in motion (Watts, 1980). Finally, although the teacher was not the audience of the literature, traditional forms of “one-size-fits-all”

in-service training must be abandoned. The use of stage theory should be implemented in the creation of trainings to tailor to the needs of the specific teacher creating an individualized approach for teacher change (Christensen, et al., 1983). More importantly, snap shot workshops that provide little reflection and practice would prove to be ineffective and treat the teacher as an outsider (Christensen, et al., 1983; Duffy & Roehler, 1986; Watts, 1980).

From the immense amount of literature put out about the description of stages teachers go through during their career, a call for instruments to be created based on this information was announced. Using an evolved teacher checklist based on Fuller's research, Adams and Martray (1981) investigated teachers' perceived concerns over a six year period. Beginning with the participant's student teacher year, they followed these preservice teachers until their fifth year of teaching. This longitudinal study was intended to inform, and reform if necessary, a university teacher education program. Beginning with 152 students representing both elementary and secondary levels but ending with 53, he concluded that concerns that these teachers had supported Fuller's stages of development with some small inconsistencies. Data were collected through self-reports, observations; and peer, student, and supervisor ratings. Although the "survival" stage teachers were very concerned with "self" their first few years, instructional impact concerns were the highest for all stages across all years of experience. This conflicted with Fuller's theories that once teachers enter into their late novice years they should become less concerned with making an impact as they are becoming more confident with their teaching style.

In an additional study, Burke (1985) set out to capture teacher concerns and to expand the framework. The Attitudes Toward Personal Teaching Behaviors (ATPTB) instrument was developed to capture attitudes teachers have that impact their personal environment and organizational environment which influenced teacher growth through. The data collected through survey from 57 teachers varying in years experience and location were intended to guide the *administrator* in developing individualized staff development trainings through using the instrument. By combining teachers with like needs, those in charge of creating trainings could meet their needs more effectively. As with the study of Adams and Martray (1981) and the few others that preceded him (excluding Glassberg & Oja, 1981), Burke's work merely provided descriptive information about what a teacher feels as they progress through their career. There were no connections made to what factors influenced the advancement through stages or the incidents and techniques that aid a teacher in overcoming the concerns/stress they encounter.

What was clearly evident in the literature from the nineteen eighties was its effort to disseminate knowledge of stage theory and advocate its usage for reforming professional development of teachers. Christensen, Burk, Fessler, and Hagstrom (1983) not only pointed out these facts, but also advocated the direction that reform should take. Researchers found that reform must lead away from the assumption that development is a device to change failing teachers as they must surely lack the know how to teach effectively. An assumption of ineffectiveness only leads to an atmosphere of control on the administrator's side and resistance on the side of the teachers. Furthermore, reform of teacher development must lead towards looking at the individual and his or her needs

rather than a blanketed solution district-wide. It must also work with the teacher to allow for a self-directed and self-dictated program to lead advancement (Allain 1985; Christensen, et al., 1983). Administrators and training planners should move away from such an outdated assumption and embrace the “developmental assumption that teachers need not be weak in order to become stronger” (Christensen, et al., 1983, pp. 14-15). Although inservice teachers were included in several of the studies, most of the research for this time period revolved around using stages of developmental concerns to improve college teacher education programs to assist student teachers and their induction into the profession. It should be noted that one caveat to consider when advocating stage theory for reform in professional development came from Huberman’s (1989) study of Switzerland teachers and schools. From his research he warned that stage theory is not a “one-size-fits-all” theory for every teacher when looking from a school-wide lens. Many influences such as the school atmosphere reflect teacher development. He argued that instability from school to school and teacher to teacher caused gaps in truly utilizing stage theory knowledge cautioning to researchers about the individual nature of this theory.

The next section of this review presents literature on stages of teacher development from the end of the twentieth century and into the early 21st century. With the dawning of a new millennium, literature on stages of teacher development began to shift away from defining stages one must travel through and ventured into the territory of creating critical opportunities for teachers to become aware of themselves growing and evolving.

Nineteen nineties through the early 21st century (1990-2010)

As we explore professional change, we must remind one another that what we know about young readers and writers, we know about all people learning, from 6 to grey-haired 60: Everyone has a right to have a say in their own learning, to write their own poems. . .

-Jarrell, 1963, p. 15

(excerpt from Neilson, 1991)

In her own review of teacher change literature, Richardson (1990) notes that there are two “camps” that encompass the literature involving teacher development: Teacher Change and Learning-to-teach. Both of these fields of literature revolve around improving teacher productivity. Teacher change scholars of this time viewed reform from the outside looking in. They used theoretical stances to shape state, district, and school levels where change is prescribed through informed decisions on what is best for the teacher and school. As a result when reform failed, teachers bore the brunt of the responsibility for the failure rather than looking at the reform itself. A highlight of change literature for this time was that change was viewed as something that non-classroom teachers were advising to do that seemed to be in their best interest suggesting a lack of autonomy for the teacher to decide their own course of development. In contrast to the change literature, learning-to-teach literature brought in the importance of autonomy into the change equation. Learning-to-teach literature looked at the individual teacher and the concerns, beliefs, and behaviors that influence growth and change in the profession. Later in the lineage of its literature, it shifted to the cognitive domain and reflective importance history. Richardson brought together these two distinctly different processes for teacher change to create her own theory about why large scale reform fails at having lasting change. The theory recommends teacher involvement with decision making relating to the reform efforts that utilizes their experience throughout the process.

Among Richardson's (1990) findings on change research, she pointed out possible factors that influenced the teacher's reluctance to change such as organizational and individual factors. Factors that may impact whether change is received or rejected are:

- 1) Does this reform match my philosophies and teaching style?
- 2) Does the school organization believe and support this reform?
- 3) Will this aid in my overall growth as a teacher? (p. 11).

Investigating this issue herself, Richardson developed a three-year-long project designed to address the problem of teacher reluctance for the U. S. Department of Education. Over the course of the investigation, teachers participating in the project were given research-based reading comprehension instruction strategies. Following her analysis of the two separate pieces of literature, the practices/activities presented to the teachers were delivered in a way that matched their beliefs and teaching personality. Some teachers had practical knowledge relating to the activity that allowed for implementation, but many times teachers without background or reasons for using it resulted in a watered down unrecognizable technique from the original research-based concept. Additionally, when given research-based reading instruction content to examine (theory), many teachers were reluctant to embrace the technique even if it matched personal beliefs due to the lack of a discourse for that particular reading style. For these teachers, research and practice were not speaking the same language. Much of the lack of acceptance of a particular practice came from external factors. The school was not supportive of these practices and required other forms of reading instruction.

Richardson concluded from the review of literature and her investigation that educational reformist cannot simply deliver “best practices” without providing opportunities for teacher to reason and ground the justification for the implementation. They also must open up dialogue for discussion on how to bridge old policies with new ones that bring theory and practice on more equal grounds from the teacher’s perspective. Reform which simply distributes knowledge to the teachers weakens and trains teachers to become passive receivers of this knowledge. Questioning themselves and their practices allows for the development of a more flexible teacher that will embrace inquiry regarding practices of reform resulting in an environment for change and growth (Grossman, 1992; Neilson, 1991; Richardson, 1990).

The nineteen nineties began an era of putting theory into practice for teacher change literature. While researchers like Fuller, Katz, and Burden set out to establish the foundation for stages of teacher development, researchers at this point began to use the literature to find out how teachers relate to the stages, if the stages were valid for their participants or how to improve college education programs by knowing how the concerns and beliefs of their preservice teachers will impact their inservice development, the latter objective being the focus for much of the research of this time (Eisenhart, 1991; Grossman, 1992; Kagan, 1992; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994; Levin, 1992). Work from scholars such as Kagan (1992) validates Fuller’s theory that teachers must travel through each stage and places the novice teacher (defined as student teacher) in a survival mode that is confounded with lack of knowledge of students and classroom. Through her own analysis of specific pieces of literature that looked at novice teachers from elementary and secondary education programs, she concluded that these novice

teachers must, as Fuller pointed out, begin with a minimal skills approach to teaching. They are not capable of thinking any more critical at this point until their personal prior beliefs about teaching, classroom management, and child understanding have been validated, justified, and elaborated through the experience brought on from their first few stages of teaching. Through her review and her own studies with novice teachers, Kagan created an extended model of stages theory to include schema theory that would account for the factor of prior teacher beliefs that come with novice teachers before they enter a program. Kagan believed that reflective teaching cannot occur unless the survival stage has been tamed by acquiring procedural and instructional routines.

Grossman (1992) rebuked the claim that teachers must start out simplistically by presenting her own literature review of research that supported novice teachers *are* capable of reflective teaching congruently with the survival stage. After presenting her own review of the literature, she argued that teachers cannot separate such procedural routines like classroom management without reflecting on its impact of pedagogy. As educators of teachers, it is vital for novice teachers to be presented with opportunities to ask worthy questions of all aspects of teaching rather than to assume they are not ready for these tasks. Grossman points out that if maintaining teacher productivity is what is desired, than such an “old school” approach may be warranted, but if education wants to have teachers that push forward into the unknown, then teachers of educators must embrace an approach that promotes risk and inquiry rather than acceptance and mastery of skills. What seemed to be occurring in teacher change literature was a differing of perspectives which was also happening in other areas of education such as reading instruction (i.e., reading wars of skills versus whole language). As Grossman explained,

“just as classroom teachers are learning to regard their students as thinkers, so must teacher educators learn to honor the capacities of their students as pedagogically critical thinkers” (p. 176-77).

Marso and Pigge (1994), in an attempt to validate the diverse teacher population and relate their concerns to the stages of development set forth by Fuller, selected “outstanding” teachers both preservice and inservice that could be cross-sectionally compared. This study concurred with Fuller’s stages that these outstanding preservice teachers just beginning their training were more concerned about surviving than inservice teachers at three later stages of development. Marso and Pigge compared multiple groups of outstanding inservice teachers within the group and found that the concerns Fuller stated such as a shift from concerns about self to concerns about student later in the stages were present, but mentioned that there were some discrepancies to the exact stages Fuller mentioned the concerns shifted. Although the study supported the previous literature on stages of teacher development, it failed to advance the literature past what was already known about concerns of teachers. It left questioning about inservice teachers advancement.

If the previous decade of the 1990s sought to validate and extend literature of stage development, the decade beginning in 2000 took a sharp turn inward looking deeper and further into the stages that teachers travel. Studies during this time period looked at causation for movement through the stages rather than indicators for the stages themselves in teachers (Conway & Clark, 2003; Moyer & Husman, 2000; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001). No longer were there clear cut description of years experience for advancement, but researchers were beginning to connect transformative agents as the sole

expectorant. Moyer and Husman (2000) added the concept of autonomy to the equation of teacher efficiency and growth. Those teachers that showed elements of autonomy-supportive behaviors also had classrooms with student driven learners and were in continual teacher growth versus those teachers with more controlling behaviors. Their research confirmed prior beliefs about years of experience being connected to autonomy driven teachers, but also indicated that although less experienced teachers were quite different in these behaviors, autonomy could be present and in fact accelerated in less experienced teachers if the support was provided. They specifically called for a need to examine successful teachers ending their initial teaching years to discover critical factors that supported their development of autonomy-supportive behaviors. The concreteness of the stages seemed to become more fluid based on experiences these teachers were encountering.

In addition to looking at causation for movement through the stages of development, the literature also began to investigate depth and complexity of growth with a more critical lens about the personal contribution of life-long learning rather than simply the concerns teachers collect during each stage (Conway & Clark, 2003; Steffy & Wolf, 2001). In the mist of this evolution, Fuller's stages from the 1970s were questioned for their relevance for a new millennium of teachers. Through a series of teacher interviews, Conway and Clark (2003) found that not only did these novice teachers develop concerns related to Fuller's three stages of development, but they also acquired "inward" concerns related to developing their "self" as a teacher (pp. 478-479). This "inward" look presented a critical constructivist theory of development that built on a positive problem-solving approach that reached for teacher's aspirations rather than a

model that focused on the negative concerns a teacher had during their career. Through their research, Conway and Clark also debunked Fuller's account regarding the ability for teachers to become metacognitive towards their pedagogy at such an early stage.

Moving away from Fuller's more stagnate stages of development, stage development research revolutionized stage theory to advocate a cyclical movement throughout a teacher's career (Berci, 2006; Conway & Clark, 2003; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001). Teachers as life-long learners will repeatedly begin and advance through stages of development as challenges to their pedagogy present themselves. Steffy and Wolfe (2001) presented six cyclical stages that were more fluid allowing for a more personal connection to a teachers development and aiding in retention in the profession. They argued that teachers throughout their career will begin new adventures of their teaching going through phases of being a *novice*, *apprentice*, *professional*, *expert*, *distinguished*, and *emeritus*. Steffy and Wolfe brought to this body of literature a view of a transformative pedagogy that required the learner to reflect, redefine, and readjust his/her teaching resulting in growth. They advocated that the key was for those responsible for novice teachers not to diminish the genuine passion these teacher have about their ability to become expert teachers by providing support for advancement in reflective thought.

Focusing specifically on the development of a reading educator, Snow, Griffin, and Burns (2005) added to the body of literature a perspective that teachers—reading specifically—go through these phases of development not merely facing concerns, but move through them by adapting teaching style and perfecting their craft of teaching. Using a developmental model of “teacher learning,” they specify that as teachers gain knowledge and experience they also gain identity and ownership. As they become life-

long learners of reading instruction, they also must develop a professional commitment that keeps them in a cyclical motion of learning and improving.

The model that they have created was guided by the attainment a reading teacher achieves through content knowledge. Rather than stages, their model used a pie format that included pieces of *declarative, situated, stable, expert, and reflective* notions of a knowledge base. This model positions teachers at three points of their career: preservice, novice, and master. Each of the knowledge bases are represented on the pie for every point but the size of the piece shifts or grows. Putting teachers into the domain as life-long learners means that these pieces of the pie must always be present. As one learns new information, their pieces of content knowledge may grow or shrink until they master that information again. Years of experience, therefore, are not relevant for the novice and master teacher. With new techniques constantly being introduced, a master teacher can become a novice.

As a reading teacher begins his/her journey of becoming a master educator, s/he holds more *declarative* knowledge with very little *reflective* ability. A novice teacher balances each of the knowledge pieces of pie and becomes comfortable and confident. The master reading teacher would then have a larger piece of reflective and expert knowledge base giving them both decision-making and problem-solving abilities acquiring a more critical perspective of pedagogy. Following are examples of basic content knowledge a reading teacher would own:

Declarative knowledge: Teachers would know that a phoneme is a basic unit of sound, that it is different from a syllable . . . they would know that phonemic awareness is a subcategory of phonological awareness.

Situated, can-do procedural knowledge: Teachers would possess at least a few routines for assessing phonemic awareness and a few for engaging kids in application.

Stable procedural knowledge: The routines have become more or less automatic for teachers and can begin to adapt to the needs of individual students.

Expert adaptive knowledge: Teachers are less reliant on routine. They are able to develop theory and put it into practice. They are more confident about their knowledge and can mentor or assist fellow teachers.

Reflective, organized, analyzed knowledge: Teachers can evaluate and make critical decisions as well as problem solve regarding students, their school and themselves (pp. 217-219).

Research supporting such a critical approach to teacher development becomes the focus of the teacher development literature for the later part of this decade. The process of becoming a teacher no longer seems to be realized as a stagnant set of criteria to pass through, but rather is emerging as an elevator fueled by self-awareness and attainment towards ownership of professional knowledge that can go back and forth to different levels (Berci, 2006; Conway & Clark, 2003; Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006; Fried & Amit, 2005; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001; Weasmer, Woods, & Coburn, 2008). A question practically nonexistent in prior research now begins to extend the theories of teacher development with research seeking to uncover what specifically is being developed and how it is nurtured.

In their review of professional development literature, Dall’Alba and Sandberg (2006) argued that too much time has been spent on identifying these “stages” and not enough attention has gone into the question of what a teacher is actually developing. They present their criticisms of the past research on teacher development claiming that fixed stages shroud the real understanding of development since not every teacher will go through every stage - especially the stage that one moves into to become an expert in their field. Arguing that success is not just an accumulation of skills laid forth in a stepwise order, Dall’Alba and Sandberg set up a platform for their own model of professional development which advocated the necessity to release ones desire to follow an orderly routine of growth and explore the path lead by using intuition and experimentation to advance their profession. Looking through the lens of phenomenology, it was presented that understanding was based on life experiences and how they were perceived through those experiences, “when practice is understood in a certain way, knowledge and skills will be developed accordingly” (Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006, p. 390). If one only learns the profession of teaching to be an accumulation of skills and knowledge, they will transcend that understanding into their classrooms which becomes limiting in growth for both the student and teacher.

Furthermore, too much focus on the quantitative skill acquisition during the novice years and not enough of the qualitative understanding of being in a profession was an explanation as to why some become experts while others do not. Rather than looking at their profession as a problem-solving and problem-posing occupation, these individuals take on a passive role of observing. Dall’Alba and Sandberg, feeling that previous models have been inconclusive, offered a model that allows for an individual to

move horizontally (acquisition of skills) and vertically (embodied understanding of practice). This vertical addition to professional development included constant monitoring of the critical reflective process of an individual by asking “why and how am I developing, what happened and what were the effects, and how does this change my understanding of who I am in this profession?” This process sets forth a path for individual understanding of both pedagogical and professional development. Although their model was derived from the literature, they acknowledged that much research needs to go into various fields such as curriculum development, educational platforms, professional training as well as the model itself using their approach and understanding of professional development to begin answering the question of what specifically professionals develop during their years in a profession.

Adding to this inward understanding of teacher development, the work of Berci (2006) centers on the “quest” an educator travels where both the professional world and the world of “self” drive along a parallel highway towards a merging destination allowing for both the craft and art of teaching to become conscience entities; or using Berci’s metaphor, climbing a “*staircase*” takes the educator on a more philosophical and metacognitive journey making many reflective rests with each riser and plank, “Through awareness of the continuums and their connectedness, teachers come to understand that without integrating self, their tasks remain similar to the work of machines; fragmented, mechanical, technical skill devoid of empathy and humanism, evaluated in numeric terms” (p. 56). By looking through this philosophical lens of teacher development, the educator better learns about his/her pedagogy while developing a professional identity through his/her own phenomenon of learning.

Berci explained the metaphoric concept of the “staircase” to be a place that supports both professional understanding and self-awareness. When knowledge of a specific part of their profession was acquired combined with personal understanding of how that knowledge impacts their pedagogy, teachers experienced movement up their staircase. After so many acquisitions, the traveler rests on a “landing” and reassess for the next journey. Berci theorized that such a philosophical trajectory encourages passion and commitment in the field of teaching rather than accumulation of skills. This theory of development could be practiced through project-based experiences that employ reflection and application of thought.

The infrastructure of Berci’s theory was built from four “forms” of identity that are developed throughout a teacher’s career:

First form: practical conformist. Identity struggles during this time period. Teachers are passionate observers but passive problem-solvers relying heavily on the solutions fellow colleagues have created for pedagogy and student learning.

Second form: theoretical conformist. Without being aware of it, teachers become endangered of losing their imaged identity formed during preparatory training before being allowed to challenge their juxtapositions formed prior to entering the classroom. Given the opportunity, this form of teacher sees the danger, becomes aware, and begins to question personal and professional views regarding teaching.

Third form: awakening philosophical practitioner. Wishing to “leave the nest,” this teacher begins to see a need to separate personal ideals with those of other educators through experimentation. This “testing of the waters” creates anxiety between the

possible conflict of doing what is called for and doing what is philosophically identified as one's own style if they differ.

Fourth form: authentic philosophical professional. The formation of this teacher is one of confidence and proactive thinking. They have developed a conscience identity that merges both personal and professional philosophies. They seek out new information as well as answers to their pedagogical questions to satiate a professional learning thirst that is directed toward themselves and their students' progress.

Berci used the theories of many in the field such as van Manen, Connelly and Clandinin, and Steffy to build this framework of teacher development. She calls for further research to be added that would investigate how the identity of a teacher is formed when they become consciously aware through reflective learning experiences.

Advancing the direction of looking inward at the factors directly impacting professional growth, Weasmer, Woods, and Coburn (2008) investigated what specifically enhanced movement into the "Enthusiastic and Growing Career Stage," a theoretical lens set forth by Fessler and Christiansen's (1992) framework for defining career progression. This framework adheres to the understanding that growth is not systematic but rather involves reflective environments of both personal and professional to influence this movement. Weasmer, Woods, and Coburn (2008) interviewed 30 teachers individually who represented elementary, middle, and high school grades and uncovered that for these teachers their "Individual Dispositions," "Positive Critical Incidents," and "Family Support" were influential in their movement to and in the "Enthusiastic and Growing Career Stage," a stage of Fessler and Christiansen's framework that represents teachers

who embrace their profession and work at evolving their position to aid their students success (pp. 22-24).

For these teachers, their “Individual Dispositions” made a large impact on their growth. They passionately cared about their professional development and gauged their own needs by what they felt their students needed. They wanted to stay current and keep with the latest pedagogical developments. Twenty-four teachers identified that their students’ responses to their teaching were strong motivators and dictators in seeking professional development. If they saw something working with the students, they sought out more information regarding that practice and were excited with the new implementation. This led to an eagerness to adapt to the learning needs of their students. These developments intermingled with their personal time constraints. They found themselves naturally using their personal time to read up on or practice pedagogical theory. Other dispositions found in these teachers were leadership qualities used at the school and district level as well as in professional organizations. “Positive Critical Incidents” revolved around professional development, mentoring with colleagues, and advanced coursework. Through these avenues, the teachers interviewed were able to find the needed information that feed their desire to advance in their profession and service their students. They showed an understanding that to instill a love of learning in their students; they must embrace the notion themselves as life-long learners. This desire to continue their learning could not be embraced if it were not for a strong “Family Support.” Weasmer, Woods, and Coburn found this to be essential in teachers who are successful in the profession which included an understanding from family members that teaching is a part of who they are as individuals. For these teachers, teaching is not just a

job but an extension of an identity that does not draw a line between professional and personal characteristics.

What these researches point to is a need for further understanding regarding the “Personal Environments” of teachers and their motivational factors that lead them down a positive growth path. Understanding more about the unique encounters that successful teachers have can better support those who struggle to evolve in their stages of professional change. In this more current set of beliefs, these theorists share a collective understanding that for teachers to grow they must challenge their ever changing understanding of what it means to be an individual in their chosen profession. Consequently, this means participating in active reflection and becoming professionally aware of the growth process. However, what specifically is being developed for novice teachers (including the critical components which fall outside of the concerns found in the fixed stages of development) and why these components are impactful are still to be explored. A more narrowed view of literature pertaining to novice teachers specifically will be addressed in the next section.

Understanding the Novice Teacher

New teachers are more likely to stay in teaching and remain at their schools when they perceive their school to be places that do three things: promote frequent and reciprocal interaction among faculty members across experience levels; recognize new teachers' needs as beginners; and develop shared responsibility among teachers for the school and its students.

-Kardos and Johnson, 2007, p. 2085

Studies that specifically explored the concerns, understanding and experiences of novice teachers can be grouped into two types, those which studied the transition from preservice to inservice teaching of their first year only (the majority of studies) and those which followed individuals past their first year and into subsequent years mostly looking

at the process of conceptual understanding. Topics that were researched included understanding the transition from university to classroom, retention of teachers, support systems –specifically the positive and negative results of induction through mentoring programs, and uncovering what was successful for developing a professional and pedagogical identity for novice teacher (these studies will be included in the next section on Voicing Identity and Ownership).

Understanding the transition. Early studies on teacher development beginning with the 1960s uncovered the identifiable concerns that contributed to the career of a teacher. For several decades thereafter, these concerns were connected with stages that teachers went through and explained effective or ineffective teaching abilities (Burden, 1982; Fuller, 1969; Katz, 1972; Watts, 1980). Deepening this exploration, researchers sought to understand the manifestation of these concerns at the first stage of development and how they contributed to teacher success. Corcoran (1981), Blasé (1985), and Smagorinsky, et al. (2004) provided a perspective of socialization, rationalization, and acculturation for transition and transfer of the preservice university student into the reality of the classroom. Their findings concluded that there appears to be a restrictive collar around novice teachers that inhibits them from embracing individuality. These studies employed case study methodologies and interviewed beginning teachers during their first year of classroom teaching to uncover firsthand accounts of the psychological aspect of novice teachers. Corcoran (1981) concluded that the lack of success at transferring learned understanding from university education programs during the first year was a result of being “temporarily paralyzed” (p. 23). Not knowing the cultural, social, and environmental factors of “school” coupled with the fear of others becoming

aware of these shortcomings consumed the beginning teachers leaving them to resort to methods of teaching that contradict learned practices and beliefs from their university program. During this time of paralysis, beginning teachers conformed to school culture procedures to help define pedagogy, curriculum, and professional responsibilities.

Corcoran found that when the paralysis subsided, the participants began to refer back to their preservice education and make connection to learned practical applications.

Zeichner and Tabachnick (1985) also found that after a period of doubt, contradiction, and isolation, the first year teachers in their study created ways of holding on to their beliefs of pedagogy developed at the university level regardless of an attempt by the school culture to influence change.

Blasé (1985), Rust (1994), and Smagorinsky et al. (2004) support this idea of a transition period or “shock” referring to a process of adapting and enduring before one can begin to rely on prior teaching beliefs. This transition period is influenced by the supportive nature of the school environment. These researchers found that school environments were authoritarian and not conducive to allowing the beginning teacher to adapt and use learned understandings of teaching. The environments created decline in their theoretical beliefs and directed them to resort to a more controlling and manageable teaching perspective. Although some success in overcoming this transition period was noted, these studies indicated that most beginning teachers lost ability to apply university ideologies, confidence to make decisions, and creativity for teaching in the absence of a well designed support system.

To further understand the transition novice teachers made when leaving the university education program and entering the in-service classroom environment,

Grisham (2000) examined the effectiveness constructivist literacy undergraduate coursework had on participants' beliefs and practices in teaching reading or language arts. Following 12 novice teachers during their student teaching experience and continuing through the second year of in-service teaching, Grisham found through cross-case analysis that the undergraduate constructivist literacy coursework did have a measurable impact on the participants' beliefs about teaching reading at the beginning of their teaching career. Unfortunately, an observable decline to maintain a constructivist theory was noted towards the end of the second year of teaching. Like Blasé (1985), Rust (1994), and Smagorinsky et al. (2004), the environment found at the participants' school played a factor in developing their reading teacher beliefs. When support and encouragement for a constructivist approach for teaching reading was provided, participants had a higher rate of transferring university coursework ideologies. Additionally, participants who utilized read-aloud opportunities in their classrooms were observed to be more constructivists in their practices. Grisham found that teachers' beliefs and practice of reading instruction did not always coincide. Participants either considered themselves to be practicing constructivist beliefs when they were not, or vice versa. When participants were aware of the discrepancy between theory and practice, they associated the teaching assignment or school environment as the reason for the disconnect. Another observation worth noting was the lack of complex reading teacher development practices. By the end of the third year of the study, most participants were developing surface level reading instruction skills rather than a deeper theoretical understanding for teaching reading. What was essential from Grisham's study was that

undergraduate course work did influence teacher beliefs and practice upon entering a teaching assignment.

Support systems in the first year. Since the 1980s, much emphasis has been given to creating support systems which help teachers transition into the school environment (Andrews & Martin, 2003; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). The most utilized system is an Induction program. Common features of an Induction program can range from a single “welcome” day to multiple-day administrative sessions and mentor assignments.

Although success in transitioning and retaining teachers can be contributed to participating in an Induction program, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that there was more effect when the Induction program included multiple resources such as mentors, reduced work load, and correlating same schedules for mentor and mentee. Even with these measures in place, research found that most mentor programs were ill-designed or improperly conducted leaving the beginning teacher to become isolated. Deal and Chatman (1989) found that when a mentor program was weak (mentor had not been trained or program was conceptually flawed) the beginning teacher withdrew into the confines of his/her classroom and relied on the students to validate, dismantle, or extend teaching beliefs. For the beginning teacher, students became the primary source for both positive and negative indicators of growth. Many times this withdrawal was a result of many factors such as conflict of ideology, a competitive environment, or neglect.

Consistent with these finding, Bullough (1990) followed a teacher who outwardly appeared to be managing the transition into the school environment. This teacher privately went through tough waves of doubt the first year and found little support to develop her professional identity. Conceptual understanding of teaching was strong but

there was an emotional disconnect between personal and professional space. The mentor program had been designed to check for the technical attributes of teaching rather than the personal and emotion. In addition to a program being ill-designed, many times mentors are mismatched. Philosophy differences between mentor and mentee and a stigmatic label of being a novice teacher were found to hinder employing personal beliefs or developing pedagogical ownership damaging a fragile novice teacher identity. (Rippon & Martin, 2006; Smagorinsky et al., 2004).

In contrast to these negative findings of mentor programs, research does support the Induction program as an effective means of transitioning teachers into a school system (Andrews & Martin, 2003; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Halford (1989) followed a California kindergarten teacher into the first year and identified the following mentor program components that made the transition successful: a) supportive administration; b) observation time between mentor and mentee; c) release time to visit other schools; d) attend training together; e) program training for the mentor. The investigation into this specific mentor program design found the investment was both financially and professional advantageous. The state saved money by reducing teacher attrition and the mentor/mentee relationship developed professional relationships and loyalty to the profession (pp. 2-4).

Having a well designed mentor program does not guarantee a smooth travel through the induction period. Kardos and Johnson (2007) reported from a survey of 486 first- and second-year teachers in California, Florida, Massachusetts, and Michigan that these teachers continued to feel isolated and on their own even with the availability of a structured mentor program. These teachers were isolated from professional interaction,

presumed expert from day one, and not part of a collective school-wide community. Most professional cultures outside of education scaffold induction regarding workload and provide extensive on-the-job training about their specific work cultures. The teachers Kardos and Johnson surveyed expressed a desire for structured support within the school regarding procedure and curriculum as well as collegial interaction with other teachers.

Entering the new millennium, mentor programs must evolve further to meet the needs of beginning teachers. Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) found that the baby boomers will be leaving the classroom and there will be a large population of novice teachers filling these spaces. They concluded that school systems can no longer afford to have an isolated and individual entrance into their school environment and prescribed for schools to create an open environment that encourages collaboration rather than competition between veteran and novice teachers. Schools will need to push induction to also include learning about school and community cultures. Introducing new teachers to the social and geographic makeup of the student population will help ease induction and better prepare teachers for the psychological and emotional aspects of teaching. They predict that mentoring as it has been will fail the mentee unless progressive ideas are embraced that help to provide structure and guidance for novice teachers. Such an innovative adaptation to the mentor program was explored through virtual coaching. Rock, Gregg, Gable, and Zigmond (2009) reported on the use of an earphone piece between mentor university supervisor and the teacher. Such new technologies helped the teacher feel less isolated in the classroom and provided one-the-spot nonjudgmental consultation regarding teaching methods and classroom management.

In addition to understanding stages of development and the effects of induction programs, novice teacher literature highlighted specific needs and wants that novice teachers voiced for helping the transition into the classroom. Researchers found that novice teachers wanted to be treated equally but with a scaffolding structure. Specific mentor programs did not need to be in place if an environment of support and respect was present at the school. New teachers did experience stress and found that it was not so much related to knowledge about teaching children but rather it was emotional stress with the administrative culture of a school (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Kauffman, Johnson, Liu, & Peske, 2002; Rippon & Martin, 2006). They needed recognition by school colleagues and students regarding their impact and influence of student success. This recognition guided their development and validated school culture understanding. Teachers from these studies wanted structure with understanding school curriculum and to be guided respectfully in its use so that after gaining experience they would be able to move away from the structure and develop personal pedagogy. Not having this structure lead to emotional and physical stress as new teachers found themselves spending excessive amounts of time creating materials from vague understandings.

Chubbuck, Clift, Allard, and Quinian (2001) found that novice teachers benefitted from mentor-like supervisors such as university partnerships that provided a safe and unbiased view of their progress of managing their own classroom. This type of support systems provided a venue for novice teachers to share emotional, pedagogical, and professional concerns. Again, these novice teachers voiced a need for learning more about the school culture, time to share with colleagues, opportunity to develop and explore personal pedagogy without judgment, specific training which was geared for

novice teachers and which provided immediate “how-to” application, and one of the highest called-for need was time for reflection on professional training and classroom practices. Playing it “safe” and closing the door to let novice teachers develop on their own was found to be a dangerous move. This leaves novice teachers to the possibility of developing ideals that are not sound or to rationalize poor teaching approaches out of a basic need to survive.

The review of literature in this section *Teacher Change and the Identity of a Novice Teacher* presented a historical perspective of how the field of education has come to understand the way teachers develop. Entering the new millennium has brought a shift in the lens researchers use to investigate the growth of a teacher. What was once a lens of predetermined stages and accumulation of knowledge and skill has evolved into a lens that magnifies the life experiences of the teacher to extrapolate understanding for how the teacher maneuvers the quest of becoming a teacher. There has been much debate by stage theorists that novice teachers are unable to form an identity during their beginning years because of the concerns that must be navigated before such cognitive abilities can be developed. The research presented in the latter section on novice teachers suggested that these concerns may be imposed on novice teachers by the system’s cultural environment and poor management of induction processes rather than predetermined course of development based on stage development. It also calls for the continued research of the novice teachers’ experiences and how they use them to understand their profession and their teacher identity. The following section presents the literature on the way teachers have conquered their novice years by taking ownership of their pedagogical direction and the critical incidents that supported the success.

Voicing Pedagogical Ownership and Professional Identity

The second section of this literature review explores the research and theories of voicing pedagogical ownership and professional identity. This information will be organized into the three subsections: pedagogical ownership, professional identity and critical pedagogy and identity. Each section will present research and theories connecting to the ways novice teachers have developed their pedagogical ownership and professional identity.

Pedagogical Ownership

Preparation . . . representation . . . instructional selection . . . adaptation . . . tailoring . . . These forms of transformation, these aspects of the process wherein one moves from personal comprehension to preparing for the comprehension of others, are the essence of the act of pedagogical reasoning, of teaching as thinking, and of planning –whether explicitly or implicitly –the performance of teaching.

-Lee S. Shulman, 1987, p. 16.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge. While many in the field of education during the 1980s believed teacher development to be an accumulation of content and skills, Shulman (1987) argued that developing pedagogy included a humanistic element in the make-up of a teacher. Such a teacher could be found at the intersecting points of content knowledge and pedagogy to form a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge. Teachers who reached this intersection added to their content knowledge the understanding of adaptation through trial and error. It is through the experiences of success and failure that a true understanding of pedagogy can be formed. In keeping with the notion of a human element where personal reasoning and personal reflection reside, teachers are in a continual cycle of addressing the curricular goals, classroom environment, and level of

their content knowledge with their understanding of teaching style and student learning. At this intersection, the teacher is set apart from those who have acquired content knowledge with those who have the ability to know how to maneuver the quest of achieving significant teaching through the *use* of content knowledge. This type of teacher takes the student into the depths of the content where curiosity and exploration can be nourished.

From Shulman's efforts to understand the way a novice teacher evolves into a master of his/her content, he defined pedagogical ownership to be the taking of content and transforming it into meaningful learning for students based on their needs. Pedagogical ownership includes the reasoning for selecting and adapting approaches based on evaluating for effectiveness and reflecting on the success and failure of the adaptation. These actions are based on a strong content knowledge foundation, but adding the act of reflecting to develop pedagogical reasoning allows the teacher to validate and compare judgments about teaching beliefs. These validations create new comprehension of their teaching identity. Understanding pedagogical development embraces the idea that skill alone cannot help transcend the novice teacher into mastering and owning his/her pedagogy, the human elements of reasoning and adapting help to inform this transformation.

This brings into question the effects the environment has on a novice teacher's ability to successfully apply Shulman's pedagogical reasoning processes. As previously discussed in this review, school culture has a direct impact on how a teacher develops pedagogically. The socialization of a novice teacher into the school system accounts for much of the stress directly affecting their pedagogical knowledge development (Blasé,

1985; Hoffman et al., 2005; Kuzmic, 1994; Maloch et al., 2003; Smagorinsky et al., 2004). Kuzmic (1994) found that the novice teacher he followed in an ethnographic study was able to maintain the beliefs of pedagogical reasoning through reflection but at a cost. The school culture and administrative requirements became overwhelming and at moments interrupted teaching, planning, and learning.

Kilgore, Ross, and Zbikowski (1990) also found administrative support to be a strong factor in teachers' successful ability to be reflective in their problem-solving abilities during their first year teaching. When novice teachers were provided with resources to rely on such as collaboration with colleagues, university connections and professional freedom, reflective natures were encouraged and maintained. This encouragement leads to autonomy and confidence for decision making. One of the participants without a support structure tended to become defensive, reclusive, and unresourceful when it came to evolving pedagogical understanding. Problem-resolution was difficult to comprehend due to a victimized identity causing teaching for this participant to become one-dimensional. The absence of a supportive environment did not always lead to an undeveloped reflective attitude. Kilgore, Ross, and Zbikowski found personal commitment to success to be a strong factor for developing a reflective attitude in some participants regardless of a supportive environment. They concluded that novice teachers can pay attention to more critical aspects of their teaching which added to the criticism of stage theory which argues novice teachers are not, in a professional perspective, cognitively ready to make such thinking processes for teaching. Although not required for everyone, a well structured, supportive environment which allows for

teacher exploration and provides avenues for collaboration improves the likelihood of reaching such a level in their teaching.

Pedagogical thinking. Kansa'nen et al. (2000) reviewed a model for their research on pedagogical thinking which explained a process for developing pedagogical reasoning in a more direct act through what is called “purposiveness” (p. 23). Teachers develop conscious awareness in their need to understand curricular goals before they can form ownership of their understanding of pedagogy. Reflection plays a large role in this action as it helps move teachers toward purposefully asking value questions to deepen their understanding. Reflection brings the awareness of responsibility for their development, “purposiveness may be an idealistic characteristic of the teacher’s thinking and action, but in any case it is the core of a teacher’s pedagogical thinking” (p. 28). Kansa'nen et al. explained that understanding pedagogy included understanding the basic idea of conducting research. When teachers approach their teaching from a research lens, they increase autonomy and ownership by building theory from their own inquiry of their instructional practices.

Kansa'nen et al.’s research model rests on the understanding of Schon’s (1983) reflection-in-action. When individuals become knowledgeable in their profession; they begin to turn “knowing” into “acting” by asking question about how they came to understand and use knowledge in certain ways. The action of knowing (which involves reflection) is the explanation for how an individual who has mastered “the knowing” of something reacts calmly and scholarly to the unknown (pp. 49- 54). They have learned to adjust to the situation and to notice how the adjustments affect the outcome of the experience. Instinctive perspective leads to improvisation which leads to invention to

apply and act on the understanding for a given experience. Schon referred to the process as “reflection-in-action” (p. 56). Surprise becomes a powerful ally for this process.

When individuals are surprised at the occurrence or outcome of an experience, they stop to explore how the action was experienced. The reflection-in-action occurring during or after an experience, leads to replication of the action or reconstruction to develop theory.

Individuals may reflect on how they encountered the experience, how the experience evolved, how it decomposed, or how other individuals reacted to the action moving

“knowing-in-action to knowledge-in action” (pp. 59-62). Knowledge then becomes part

of a repertoire of experiences to help the individual become calm and re-active in new situations. Schon references good teaching not to be a method but an art requiring the

teacher to be able to search the situation for the best approaches that match the

experience, the teacher and the student, “An artful teacher sees a child’s difficulty in

learning to read not as a defect in the child but as a defect of his own instruction” (p. 66).

Such an approach requires the individual to take on a role as researcher. It begins with the element of “surprise, puzzlement or confusion,” and then moves to reflection and finally

experimentation to create and validate theory. If education relies only on the

accumulation of skill and content knowledge, it creates a situation of idleness,

passiveness, and fear of the unknown. Schon argues for reflection-in-action to become a critical component for the pedagogical development of individuals.

Since Schon’s proclamation, reflective practices have been supported in the literature to be a critical component for the pedagogical development of novice teachers (Clandinin, 1989; Chubbuck, Clift, Allard, & Quinian, 2001; Kansa’nen et al., 2000; Kilgore, Ross, & Zbikowski, 1990; Kuzmic, 1994; Levin, Hammer, & Coffey, 2009;

Rust, 1999; Tickle, 1991). While exploring the ways novice teachers included attention to student thinking in their pedagogical thinking practices, Levin, Hammer, and Coffey (2009) found some novice science teachers deepening the thinking processes of their students through reflecting on their questioning procedures before, during and after teaching. These teachers had supportive environments that encouraged such pedagogical decisions. Through classroom observation by the researchers, participants were documented being active in reflecting on their awareness of question formation as well as to the responses students gave. Although concerns for the general controlling of routine and procedural issues found in the school culture were evident for these novice teachers, Levin, Hammer, and Coffey accounted for the struggles and failures to attain such critical levels of pedagogical thinking by other novice teachers in the study to the failed attempts to adjust or acclimate to the school culture. In these cases, the school culture positioned these unsuccessful teachers' responsibility for managing classrooms around a direct-teacher approach which focused on content coverage rather than student-led meaningful teaching making it difficult to merge pedagogical thinking beliefs with the school structure.

Van Manen (1991) defines pedagogy to mean the “excellence” exhibited in one’s actions and reflections by either parent or teacher that centers on the child that will guide and lead them through their lives. For an individual to have such an impact, knowledge of child, learning, and teaching is essential. It is not just the “know how” that creates pedagogical “excellence,” it is also the knowledge of why and when to use such knowledge - or the craft of it. Van Manen believes that nothing less than excellence should be accepted when dealing with child development and teachers should constantly

strive for this in their pedagogy. Teachers must know themselves as a pedagogue by better studying the life stories of the children they are dealing with and making that part of their teaching. The art of crafting thoughtful pedagogical moments can be found in such practices as “reflective teaching, teacher thinking, the teacher as reflective practitioner, teacher as problem solver, teacher as decision maker, teacher as researcher” (p. 11).

Leven and Ammon (1992) investigated how novice teachers develop such pedagogical thoughtfulness through case studies with four elementary teachers over a five-year teaching period that began with two years of course work and went into three years of teaching experience. One purpose of this study was to challenge the notion of teacher development theories that expect little from novice teachers due to the concern for survival rather than development in the first years of teaching. What they found showed that all four teachers in the study developed pedagogical thinking; that pedagogical thinking can be identified in degrees and can grow deeper with experience; pedagogical thinking varies with individuals; and that it does not always match their teaching practices. Having found out this information, they concluded that little research is available to delve deeper into understanding the causation of such pedagogical growth.

Professional Identity

If one acts ‘as-if’ the stories we tell each other about how we teach and learn are important, then one believes that we not only enable ourselves to reflect, but also provide the opportunity to discuss what it means to act, speak and think in particular ways.

-B. Griffith, 2007, p.

Professional identity has been found to develop under many circumstances such as interacting with school cultures, sharing lived-experiences, validation from those within the school culture, professional experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Flores & Day, 2006; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994; Lambson, 2010; Olson & Craig, 2001; Rippon & Martin, 2006), experiences with curriculum (Hall et al., 2010; Valencia, Place, Martin, & Grossman, 2006), developing content knowledge and training (Hoffman et al., 2005; Maloch et al., 2003) and political policy (Barrett, 2009; Parkison, 2008). These areas of inquiry have shown it vital for novice teachers to search out and create an identity that allows them to form a space where they can be heard in the educational arena.

Flores and Day (2006) argue that the formation of identity is an in-motion force among teachers and is crucial in building a bond between the profession and their inner selves. Identity is constantly evolving through reflecting on how the experiences of teaching in and out of the school effect who they are as professionals. These understandings of the profession are the foundation for motivation and commitment to teaching. Although a teacher's identity is influenced and reconstructed through reflection; emotions and socialization are significant components in its formation as well (Flores & Day, 2006; Rippon & Martin, 2006). Teachers encounter a broad spectrum of emotions while teaching. Emotions, both positive and negative, help a teacher relate to students, parents, colleagues, and the school environment. They can range from joy, pride, and excitement to frustration, insecurity, and vulnerability. Acceptance socially into the school environment by students and colleagues has a substantial effect on a teacher's identity (Flores & Day, 2006).

Flores and Day (2006) investigated 14 new teachers and how their professional identities were shaped and reshaped over a two-year teaching span. They found that past experiences with school and learning played a strong role in shaping their teacher identities. Most of the teachers in their study who described teaching to be a rewarding experience felt that part of who they were required them to care for the “whole” student both socially and academically. These teachers were aware of the significant impact of training or specific individuals that helped them develop as a teacher, including the positive responses from students about their teaching efforts. The more these teachers developed an understanding of students’ needs and of their own pedagogical responsibilities, the stronger they identified with the profession. A weak relationship with the school culture resulted in isolation and poor connection with identity for teachers who struggled the first few years. These teachers found themselves conforming to teacher-centered practices rather than developing a student-centered and reflective pedagogy. Most of the participants of this study experienced a process of “shaping” and “re-shaping” of their identity during the two years, depending on the factors of emotion and the social context of the school culture.

Growth of an identity through life-stories not only helps connect and deepen personal understanding of teaching, but it becomes a support system for forming and extending ideas of pedagogy for a novice teacher. Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe (1994) explored the biographical histories of 12 elementary teachers after they had completed at least five years of teaching. They uncovered that for these teachers the “self” was a crucial element in their creation of identity. They found that while most of the participants developed smoothly as a teacher, all told life-stories about critical incidents

or critical people (other professionals and students) that impacted and helped construct their teaching career. These incidents structured the stories of their professional identity and helped build understanding of the profession. The biographical stories connected incidents to their identity by validating beliefs on matters of pedagogy, student learning and professional duties such as communication with parents. They made concrete associations through the life-experience, using it to define the belief. What they also uncovered was that the actual event of telling their lived-experiences created awareness for the value of self reflection and added to the growth of their pedagogical thinking and identity. Researchers of this study suggest the need to explore the development of awareness of teacher's lived-experiences for its potential to increase teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and professional training.

In keeping with the importance of shaping a professional identity several scholars have explored identity formation by carefully constructing a narrative of a teacher's past and present experiences as well as from the thoughtful goals and aspirations for their future (Clandinin, 1989; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Olsen & Craig, 2001). Teachers' professional lives are lived out through the stories they tell forming understanding of content knowledge, school context, and identity as crafted through the daily experiences a teacher encounters. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) have coined this to be a "teachers' professional landscape." On this landscape, they argue that a teacher lives "in-classroom" and "out-of-classroom" building identity through the interaction with each. When a teacher is in the "in-classroom" landscape, they are in a safe and private place. This domain provides a sense of freedom, ownership and control.

They learn about pedagogy and students through the lived stories they practice in their classroom.

While being in the classroom landscape provides an ideological perception of teaching, the isolation that is created may not foster reflective thought (a factor already presented in this literature review as necessary for growth). The need to compare and validate understanding through conversation leads the teacher to enter the “out-of-classroom” landscape. Clandinin and Connelly found that it is when the two landscapes intertwine that conflict, dilemma, and insecurity form in a new teacher. In the “out-of-classroom” landscape, a teacher must deal with school procedures and policy requirements. This landscape rarely allows them to share the stories of the classroom. New teachers fear judgment of their stories as they might show inadequacy or uncertainty, and so they become “secret” stories using “cover” stories to share with individuals in the “out-of-classroom” landscape (pp. 12-15). Clandinin and Connelly concluded through their study of beginning teachers’ lives that they “desire to tell stories; they desire for relationship; and they desire to think again, to reflect on actions taken and things thought” (p. 154). When provided with a safe landscape to do these tasks, new teachers can build safe passage between the “in-classroom” and “out-of-classroom” landscapes and build professional identity where their “secret” stories become “stories to live by” (pp. 153-161; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

Identity through reading instruction. As presented earlier in this review, developing content knowledge is an essential element in developing pedagogical ownership. Research done between 2000-2010 also adds that when specifically used to deepen experiences with literature, content knowledge helps to build a professional

identity for the reading teacher (Hall et al., 2010; Lambson, 2010; Hoffman et al., 2005; Maloch et al., 2003; Valencia, Place, Martin, & Grossman, 2006).

In efforts to silence critics of teacher education programs at the university level regarding insufficiently prepared first-year classroom reading teachers, Maloch, et al. (2003) studied graduates of three different types of programs: Reading specialization, general education, and reading embedded. Through three telephone interviews conducted during their first year teaching, data was collected from 101 beginning teachers (40 were reading specialization graduates from three International Reading Association Commission sites offering a specialization, 28 were graduates of the general programs at those same three universities, and 33 were graduates of reading embedded programs. Through analyzing the “talk” graduates used while being interviewed, the data revealed specific differences between reading specialization graduates and general education graduates (reading embedded graduates were similar to reading specialization results) in instructional decision making, negotiations, and community. Reading specialization teachers used content knowledge and the classroom context to make meaningful decisions or alter instruction. Their identity included knowledge about reading assessment and using that information to guide instruction. They acted on occasions to negotiate school curriculum with learned practices from their university training; took leadership roles within the school setting; sought out, embraced, and reflected on reading training and created support networks. Their beliefs were seldom challenged, as opposed to the general education graduates who often felt disempowered and unable to see alternatives to negotiate ownership of their pedagogy. Overall, as a result of their university training, “reading specialization program teachers were knowledgeable and

cognizant of the complex nature of negotiating their identities and roles in their various school sites” (p. 456).

The participants that interviewed in Maloch et al. (2003) study were involved in a larger three year study sanctioned by the National Commission on Excellence in Elementary Teacher Preparation for Reading Instruction (formed by the International Reading Association in 1999). The commission’s goal was to “examine programs offered in the context of 4-year university baccalaureate programs” to evaluate the effectiveness and influence these teacher preparation programs (deemed as “excellent”) had on the developing reading teacher (Hoffman et al., 2005, p. 267). In the second study planned by the commission, Hoffman et al. (2005) continued to interview the participants from Maloch et al.’s study but added an evaluation of the classroom environment and classroom teaching using the observation instrument TEX-IN3 “which assesses the classroom literacy environment from a “social practice” perspective. Specifically, the TEX-IN3 assesses the physical text environment, the uses of the texts in this environment, and the valuing of these texts by participants” (p. 273). Hoffman et al. found that the participants followed in the second year provided evidence that “Commission teachers were successful in creating rich classroom text environments, high engagement with texts, and high levels of understanding and valuing of these texts The success commission program teachers were having at such an early point in their teaching careers was noteworthy. In fact, the performance of these teachers compared favorably with the performance of experienced teachers nominated as excellent by principals” (p. 277). At the end of this three year study, graduates from high quality preparation programs showed to be maintaining their identity as reading teacher

professionals and even excelled farther than the comparison group of teachers used in the study. The quality of the teacher preparation program did have an impact on the novice reading teacher's identity and pedagogical growth.

Valencia, Place, Martin, and Grossman (2006) followed four teachers through their first three years of teaching reading in the elementary setting to uncover how the curriculum materials provided at different schools shaped these teachers understanding of reading instruction and how these understandings changed over the three years. Two of the four teachers were provided curriculum guides as their source for teaching reading with little to no specific directive on how to accomplish the curriculum goals. These teachers found that the freedom to create their own understandings of the curriculum with their own resources allowed them to apply and build conceptual understanding of reading instruction. Their experiences with reading instruction took on an experimental approach and focused on meeting the specific reading needs of the students. One of these teachers had collegial interaction which helped validate understanding while the other relied on self-study with professional literature. Their reading teacher identity was encouraged by being in an environment that supported teacher decision-making. For these teachers, the curriculum was a scaffold for their ownership of their pedagogy and helped them to become aware of their own abilities as a reading teacher.

The other two teachers in the study were more constrained by the curriculum during their first three years. These teachers were provided with very specific curriculum programs to follow. For one of the teachers, the program required for skills to be accomplished within time frames. This teacher seemed to embrace the program and associated success with reading instruction from the completion of the tasks set forth by

the program. Although the program conflicted with her beliefs about students' individual reading instruction needs, she trusted the curriculum planners' knowledge to provide appropriate curriculum. This teacher became successful with the program use and was asked to train other teachers in how to use the program. As the years went on, she struggled with the lack of intellectual stimulation and the realization that she could not identify with any reading instruction outside this program. The researchers found that she had grown the least in developing conceptual understanding of a reading teacher identity. Professional development did not extend past the program and little encouragement was given to seek alternative perspectives. Although the program provided structure at the beginning, it prohibited exploration of other conceptual understanding for teaching reading.

Valencia et al. (2006) found that the curriculum materials, personal knowledge, dispositions, and school environment directly influenced the development of these teachers' understanding of themselves as reading teachers. While specific curriculum can be a much needed structure for beginning teachers to understand content expectations, it may turn into a crutch as they are ending their novice years and only developed surface level understanding of teaching of reading.

The use of literature in the classroom has also been found to support the development of a teacher identity. Hall, Johnson, Juzwik, Wortham, and Mosely (2010) argue a point that literacy, in its multiple forms, acts as a conduit and provides a social connection between the teacher, student, and classroom culture. Through conversation that the text can provide, personal experience and definition for understanding society can be bridged through the narrative nature of literature. When teachers make this

connection to the text and bring in personal narratives to ground the deeper meaning of the text, they build an ownership to the piece of literature through the curricular conversations created. One of the three studies Hall et al. conducted explored through case study the oral narrative conversations developed between one middle school English teacher and her students. These researchers discussed that “in literacy classrooms, oral narratives and written language (e.g. literature, students’ written narratives), can become resources for positioning selves and being positioned by others in a range of ways” (p. 236). Through the conversations that this teacher had with her students about a personal experience connected to a pieces of literature, the teacher showed how a reader makes connections to the text and how deeper meaning can derive from those connections. This teacher showed her students that she identified herself as someone who learned about herself and society through the text. The students responded to this oral narrative by feeling at ease to share their own personal narratives that related to the text. Hall et al. found that teachers can also have a social objective for teaching through pieces of literature and that they intentionally use it to help form their teacher identity as well as their students’ literacy identities. They also found from an additional study that when teachers knew their own literacy biographies, they included those experiences (oral narratives) in their pedagogical decision making.

Critical Pedagogy and Identity

Critical teachers come to know what and how students make meaning. This enables teachers to construct pedagogies that engage the impassioned spirit of students in ways that moves them to learn what they don’t know and to identify what they want to know.

-Kincheloe, 2005, p. 20

Success in our society is attributed to many things, but being literate is a foundational piece leading to most success. This assumption is based on the fact that our society grants power to this notion. We can see this power through the many qualifying symbols we attach to this success (i.e., honor roll, reading awards, diplomas, degrees, etc.). It is through these acknowledgements that social acceptance is defined. Bourdieu describes this as “institutional capital” that one receives during their life time and it is assumed that if one obtains these relics than the goal of the education system has been achieved (Carrington & Luke, 1997). An argument can be made that our future society must produce citizens that validate their worth by who they are and what they have to offer, rather than it rest solely on the tangible relics received. This shift in value representation must occur if our society is to evolve into something greater than where we are now. Reaching this level of success for education requires a growth in the reading teacher’s pedagogy and professional identity with an immense amount of “capital” being created along the way.

Carrington and Luke (1997) discuss that society has moved away from a psychological approach of literacy learning (if you know the skills than one can read and succeed) to a more socio-centered orientation of literacy (that is, skills plus the social and cultural context creates understanding). But even with this philosophy, there are still too many factors to guarantee that literacy learning will equate to success. They then argue that using Bourdieu’s sociological model helps link literacy learning to the social and cultural fields of students [teachers being the students of their profession] (p. 100). These “fields” that Bourdieu discusses encompass the knowledge base and lexical understanding for a discourse. The knowledge bases, or fields, can then be converted into

“capital”, or value. Of the three types of capital (cultural, economic, and social), *cultural capital* relates to education directly while the other two can be viewed as the consequences or byproducts of cultural capital.

Cultural capital consists of three separate capitals: *embodied, objectified, and institutional*. Embodied capital is that which makes up a human identity such as knowledge and personality traits. Objectified capital is obtained through the knowledge base of a field and can be given either physically (text) or verbally (speech) to others. The Institutional capital is the awards granted or earned that qualify the acquisition of knowledge. Carrington and Luke conclude that if following Bourdieu’s framework:

All these forms of capital – cultural, economic and social – must be authorized, that is they must be acknowledged and in some way officially ‘*deemed*’ to be of value. Capital is not capital unless it is recognized as such authoritatively in a particular social field. . . The *Symbolic capital* thus describes the social phenomenon of prestige, status and reputation which accompanies the accumulation and recognition of other forms of capital . . . but unless that social field recognizes the capital as such, that value will not be convertible (p. 103).

Administrative educators may argue that their professional development framework does exactly this for teachers. In actuality, it may just be training these teachers to “look and sound like” teachers of reading and writing on the outside with little capital being created from within. In this scenario, Carrington and Luke would argue that reading teachers need to reach outside the walls of their classrooms and find what the community values, and to use these connections to form reading instruction that relates to themselves and

their students. When students leave their classrooms, teachers need to make sure that what literacy they have learned to use can be identify, expounded on, reflected, and converted into “value” for whatever definition of success they may hold.

Novice reading teachers need to become more metacognitive about their own development and be selective about what resources they are tapping into to learn about their pedagogy and identity. Critical pedagogy is about the awareness that one must be involved in “praxis” to raise themselves out of an oppressive situation (Kincheloe, 2005). Such an oppressive situation would be an educator’s lack of ability to make quality decisions in regards to pedagogy and instruction within their classroom or even the lack of knowing such opportunities may exist. Novice reading teachers are in more need than others to gain this self-knowledge and their professional development needs to align with such growth. Social and pedagogical theory must support the practice rather than “dumbing” down our educators and reducing their cultural capital.

By using the understanding of critical pedagogy, novice reading teachers can expose themselves to the process of self-inquiry that may give them a voice in the Discourse of education (capital D used in reference to the larger more formal community of school as explained by James Gee (1989, p. 6), “. . . critical pedagogy amplifies the voices of those who have had to struggle to be heard” (p. 24). Kincheloe remarks about Donald Schon’s notion that “reflective-synthetic knowledge involves bringing all of our knowledges of teaching together so they can be employed in the critical pedagogical act” (p. 106). Teachers need to be able to use the content of learning to ask the questions that truly matter. Questions like how does this text, professional development, piece of professional literature, or conference presentation define me, my culture, and my world?

Can I make educated guesses about the relativeness of the experience to my learning process? And how does this knowledge help me in the social/professional realm of life (p. 112)?

Kincheloe argues that too often the concepts of theory and of practice are viewed as an opposing dichotomy with the assumptions of theory belonging to the university and those of practice in the domain of elementary and secondary schools. To bring these notions together to form collaboration, a reading teacher needs to add praxis (Kincheloe uses praxis to mean a process of action-reflection-action that is central to development of a consciousness of power and how it operates). With such a collaboration, “the role of the critical complex teacher educator [reading teacher] is to view practice through the lenses of the theoretical framework and the theoretical framework through the lens of the practice” (p. 111). A critical pedagogy that accomplishes such a task provides a foundation for teachers to look beyond the walls of a classroom and to develop a social theory that continues creating knowledge of the world well into their professional careers. More importantly it provides an opportunity to bring back the notion that teachers are intellectuals of their profession.

Giroux (1990) also supports a shift in professional development. He states, “we must develop a politics and pedagogy of voice as part of a theory of curriculum that opens up texts to a wider range of meanings and interpretations, while constructing student [and teacher] experience as part of a broader discourse of critical citizenship and democracy” (p. 362). The definition of “student” can be broadened to include the teacher who is a student learning about him/herself, the classroom student, and pedagogy.

When novice reading teachers take on the role of “student” they begin to develop a relationship between theory and practice. They begin to judge and interrogate current practices to better evolve curriculum into one that is grounded in not only content knowledge, but reflective and theoretical foundations - “theory in some instances directly informs practice, but in others practice restructures theory as a primary force for change. In some cases, theory . . . also provides a refuge to think beyond current forms of practice to envision what is ‘not yet’, (p. 365). A “Teacher as an Intellectual” examines text in and out of the classroom for its possibilities in developing pedagogy and professional identities. This analysis does not just provide substance to pedagogical decisions, but also provides the direction for teachers to take with their students when dealing with literacy. They are able to share with students how to examine and interrogate text for its ability to provide students with experiences that incorporate “voices, histories, and discourses” (p. 370) as examples of civic and democratic responsibilities, as well as springboards for creating places in the history to come for themselves (p. 370).

The iconic representation of school will need to be reshaped if teachers are to take on the role of public intellectuals. The classroom environment will need to support teacher and student voices that shape knowledge instead of rephrasing knowledge that has been said over and over before. It will need to provide an environment that uses literacy as a vehicle to provide a sense of place and value in the discourse of education (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Administrators must provide the professional development opportunities, support, and staging for teachers to be viewed as intellectuals. Giroux (1990) states, “We have to redefine curriculum not as a warehouse of knowledge merely to be passed on to waiting consumers but, more important, as a configuration of

knowledge, social relations, and values that introduces and legitimates a particular form of textual authority” (p. 376).

If novice reading teachers are going to be viewed as intellectuals in the arena of education and society, they will need to demonstrate their critical ability to explain pedagogy, how they came to understand it, and how it influences their decisions. They “must take a more critical and political role in defining the nature of their work, as well as in shaping their working conditions” (Giroux, 1990, p. 382). Critical reading teachers need to have the background of theory and practice that exemplifies their status and elevates them to be seen as a leader in her/his pedagogical practices. Central to this component is the role that the teacher takes in consoling society that the efforts implemented are being done in the hopes of developing a student that has a place in the history and sees himself as a contributor to the society as a human being. Our efforts in public education cannot risk ignoring the need to provide reflective, critical professional growth for the teachers. We must show students by example that the responsibility of growth resides within ourselves. If they want to be taken seriously as intellectual participants in our society, novice reading teachers must begin the journey to set the example to shape their identity.

Pedagogical ownership and teacher identity through Critical Literacy and Critical Pedagogy

The final subsection of this review will present research that investigates literacy professional development as change agents. The collected studies reviewed formed two identifiable categories: Collaborative Dialogic Literacy Studies and Teacher Research and Professional Literacy Studies.

Collaborative Dialogic Literacy Studies. If the main criterion for these studies was to have evidence of a form of literacy, then what is meant by literacy should be clarified. Knobel and Lankshear (2007) use Gee's definition of literacy as socially interacted discourse involving reading, writing, speaking, and listening to create a situated understanding. In addition this meaning of literacy also includes the ways "of thinking, believing, feeling, valuing, acting/doing and interacting in relation to people and things" as ways of becoming part of a Discourse community (p. 3).

Supporting this meaning of literacy, Rust (1999) organized a conversation group using story and personal narratives to foster authentic conversation in a risk-free environment. She rationalizes this method by stating that by, "opting for a dialogic rather than a transmission-oriented approach to professional education for teachers, the project mirrors current developments in the psychology of learning and parallels what teachers are now learning is best for educating youngsters in their classrooms" (p. 370). The purpose of the group formation was to explore how conversations can impact professional growth of new and preservice teachers. Throughout the three year examination, Rust was the "privileged observer" and took running record-like notes for later analysis. She concluded that the documentation of the dialogue showed signs that the "successful" first year teachers were developing into "competent teachers." This was evidenced by repeated discourse of ownership for classroom and curriculum, professional decision-making capabilities, and personal connection to educational issues. On the other hand, those first year teachers that did not have successful years showed less collaborative dialogue and showed little ownership to classroom, curriculum, and in decision making. They felt that they had no time to further their teacher knowledge due to

the controlling pressures of classroom management and administrative procedures. These teachers were showing signs of still being “novice” teachers. Rust began to see the connection of the participants lived experience and teaching experience as having a large impact in shaping pedagogy and recommended that the conversation group format should be extended and supported in other teacher development programs.

Teacher Researcher and Professional Literacy Learning. The remainder of the studies had similar components within their design. All still relied heavily on the dialogic nature of collaborative groups, but in addition added the building of a discourse community that created a professional identity through reading professional literature, conducting teacher research, and presenting literacy knowledge to others in the field. Such an example would be the 2001 study by Raphael et al. which dealt with the organization of a learning group. They designed the collaborative group in a more formal nature than Rust’s (1999) to address the issues surrounding the teacher’s lack of authentic literacy experiences needed to promote such types of learning in the classroom. It was also the first study in the collection to modify student literacy practices found in the classrooms to apply to the professional literacy learning of the teacher. Teachers were using the methods from their classroom to read their own professional literature. Much of the progress for the three year study was through teacher research, or “collaborative inquiry”, which guided the direction of curriculum and the professional development. The researchers gave credit to the collaborative dialogic literacy studies and the opportunities to present their findings and learning experiences to others in the field of reading as elements in their development of a powerful collective voice. Most of the

documentation of this study revolved around the curriculum that was formed out of the collaborative inquiry process.

Continuing with the same format of using dialogue, collaborative groups, and literacy learning Roe's (2004) used a case study to begin an analysis of identifying relationships between and among elements found in professional learning situations. She adds to this body of information the shift in this area from professional development to professional study. From observations of her subject, she brings to center stage the importance of informed "professional choice" as a catalyst to professional growth. Roe also highlights the need for teachers to be active literacy learners themselves before such practices can be developed in the students in their classrooms. The study begins to push professional learning into an "ecological" environment of the teacher, and advocates that the profession of teaching must be considered as a cultural connection involving the teacher's lived experiences with literacy in all forms.

Critical literacy is another element involved in professional growth for the reading teacher. Small teacher groups are beginning to show up in schools devoted to changing the social course their students are destined to follow (Rogers et al., 2005). Such groups as *The Literacy for Social Justice Teacher Research Group* are on missions to build socially just communities where students can connect their school learning to larger social issues. This group incorporates the same components found in this collection of studies and focuses on the power of teacher research and collaboration to guide instruction. As with some of the other studies presented, they add the element of professional presentation to spread their knowledge to others in the field of reading. They refer to a "reflective cycle of discussion, planning, implementing, data collection,

presenting/disseminating, and action in classrooms and communities [as] integral to sustaining social transformation” (p. 349). Literacy learning for the teacher is a vital element in such professional growth.

The final article in this review compliments the model found in Raphael et al. (2001) that modifies classroom approaches to literacy learning to meet the professional growth needs of the reading teacher. Socol (2006) uses Cambourn’s model of Natural Learning and Literacy Acquisition to immerse a staff of reading teachers in literacy events. She felt that by using this model, “Teachers could easily learn to teach literacy concepts when engaged in reading experiences that incorporate the seven conditions [immersion, demonstration, approximation, responsibility, expectation, use, and response]” (pp. 181-182). The teachers used several pieces of professional literature, formed collaborative groups, and conducted teacher research. The collaborative groups were formatted in the same methodology that the professional literature was advocating to situate the usefulness of the literacy event. In addition to other forms of measurement, the growth of these teachers was measured by looking at the written discourse found in lesson plans and analyzing terms used to convey objectives.

The common critical incidents found throughout these studies included collaboration with other reading teachers, holding meeting sessions, conducting literacy events, teacher reflection, teacher research, dialogic interaction, and the sharing of knowledge back into the community of reading teachers. They proved to be vital components for developing critical thinking teachers that became confident in their pedagogy of reading. Although more research is needed to specify how and why these are

such vital components, this form of teacher change situates literacy instruction for the individual teacher and adds personal value to the knowledge acquired during the process.

Connections to Theoretical Concepts of Literacy. These studies observed the effects of socially constructing meaning to deepen and strengthen instruction of reading and create voice and ownership that created critical incidents for the participants. Observing how collective groups form meaning has been documented by many in the field of literacy studies, and has given much information to the field of education to describe the psychology of learning (Bartlett, 1995; Vygotsky, 1986). Included in this social construction of knowledge would be the collaborative development of a discourse community (lower case “d” referring to the smaller and local day-to-day environment) that helps to situate the knowledge and form identities for individuals (Gee, 1989). Interacting between the discourses within the collaborative groups creates a form of intertextuality that occurs when multiple literacies are being used (Bahktin, 1994; Kristeva, 1986; Porter, 1986). This intertextuality helps to create dialogue among teachers that evolves into ownership, and even authorship, of information related to literacy instruction. When teachers are reading, writing, speaking, and listening about their profession, they are forming new literacies and new cultures for reading teachers. These “socioliteracies” open new opportunities for teachers to build capital from their studies for themselves as learners and leaders of their profession (Lankshear, 1999; Street, 2003).

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an historical perspective regarding the evolution of teacher development and its influence on the novice teacher. Through the literature, teacher development has seen a shift from stagnate stages of concerns that a teacher must

overcome to advance in his/her career; to a theory of ebb and flow development based on teacher's experiences, application of knowledge, and a reflective nature to challenge his/her understandings and to form an identity. Pedagogy and identity have taken on a role of authorship. For teachers to make impactful learning for the student, they must look deeper at how their development defines their understanding of teaching. Using this theory, the teacher is in control and aware of developmental needs. At this point in time, researchers continue to challenge the notion that novice teachers are incapable of pedagogical decision making with studies that highlight novice teachers actively applying reflective pedagogical practices. The literature in this area calls for the continued research of the novice teachers' experiences and how they use them to understand their teaching and professional identity; specifically, critical incidents that are encountered during these experiences that act as change agents.

Through a careful analysis of novice reading teachers' experiences, this study offers additional insight into and continues to support the latest research regarding the pedagogical development of novice reading teachers. The next chapter will provide an historical view of phenomenology and present the rationale for using this research framework to explore the ways teachers have constructed pedagogical understanding and professional identity during their novice years of teaching reading. It will provide the structure for this study and discuss the methods for collecting data.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Many in the field of education have put forth efforts to better understand the individual educator and what influences her/his identity and pedagogy through qualitative inquiry (Berci, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Shulman, 1992; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005; van Manen, 1990). Qualitative research adds to a field of study by embracing the multiple perspectives individuals have to offer. It provides such an opportunity through means of close proximity between researcher and the individual being researched (Creswell, 2007). This chapter presents the reasons and provides a background for selecting a phenomenological research design. Since the premise for phenomenology is grounded with the notion that phenomena builds knowledge and knowledge builds self identity; and this study sets out to understand more comprehensively the lived-experiences of being a novice reading teacher, a Husserlian phenomenological methodological framework was selected. This chapter will also align the theoretical framework of critical pedagogy to the study and use Moustakas' research method for outlining the design of the study.

Restating the problem and questions

My interest in novice reading educators led me to explore the ways in which five South, Southeast and West Texas reading teachers constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identities from their experiences during their novice years of teaching. This inquiry was guided by the following questions:

1. What was the essence of being a novice reading educator for these participants?

- a. How have the participants constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development from their experiences during their novice teaching years?
 - b. How have the participants constructed personal understanding of their professional identities from their experiences during their novice teaching years?
 - c. What critical incidents have occurred that helped shape their pedagogy and identity?
 - d. Did the reflective descriptions reference any form of critical pedagogy?
2. How did this phenomenological research experience impact their identity and pedagogical ownership?

Methodological Framework

Phenomenological studies are grounded in the lived-experience. Such studies want to take meaning from an experience and give it an identity and then let that voice or essence be heard. Researchers of this methodology seek to uncover the underlying foundation, structure or thread that holds meaning for that person who has experienced the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). It is important for the researcher to allow for this voice to be heard by carefully, as Moustakas explains, relying on “reflective analysis and interpretation of the research participant’s account and let the analysis speak for itself” (p. 12). With this in mind it is the researcher’s objective to set aside, or expose, any subjectivities relating to the experience to give a more impartial retelling and re-living of the account. Moustakas uses Husserl’s *epoché* term to explain the bracketing out of these preconceived notions (p. 22). Better understanding these lived-experiences builds

awareness of the needs these individuals (and others like them) have and allows for this knowledge to build “self.”

To take a deeper look at phenomenology we must take a deeper look at Edmund Husserl’s interpretation of phenomenology. Husserl (1973) discussed the idea of “*judicative doing*” where individuals go through life making judgments about each phenomenon they encounter. Once they begin this judgment process, they strive for clarification or for opinions of their “*supposed*” interpretations. This develops into cognition which draws on previous judgments and experiences to prove the “*supposed*” true or untrue. When these individuals have made the necessary connections, they provide the “*evidence*” needed to support new knowledge or to extend existing knowledge. The judgments that they initially began with evolve into meaning through the process of “*synthesis*.” This process of synthesis feeds on the consciousness of phenomenon, or life-experiences, and becomes meaningful opinions through the validation of the judgments.

Husserl (1973) then discussed that because of our individuality of life-experiences, a multiplicity of opinions can come from a single judgment through the “commonality of what was wondered, to what was learned, and to what was experienced” (pp. 42-43). We can accept this validation as being apodictic because of the ownership that transcended through our own personal reflections. The truism of who we are and the world around us comes together by embracing self-investigation of the ego to “contemplate it, and in respect of its content, explicate and describe it” (p. 27). Self-investigation and life-experiences are absolutely crucial for phenomenological research to help explain and connect meaning to identity.

Intuition heavily guides our ability to value meaning. It is the birth of conscience knowing. Both Husserl and Descartes used intuition as a foundation piece to understanding phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). Individuals build capital from an experience based on what their intuition allows. It is like a gatekeeper for the ego. The less familiar an individual is with an experience, the less likely her/his intuition will open up the gates and allow the judicative process to grow and build the essence of the phenomena. Intuition may possibly even close the gate and abandon the endeavor all together.

Although the philosophies of phenomenology can be found throughout the centuries originating in Europe, American exposure to this “phenomena” is relatively young and adjusting with the ever-changing makeup of American culture over the past 25 years (Tymieniecka, 1989). Tymieniecka recounts the birth of American phenomenology beginning in the early 1950s. It appears that although having a slow beginning, by the 1970s, with the visionary goal by John Wilde to “popularize” phenomenology, Americans did what they do best and “Americanized” the movement exploring and adapting every aspect conceived in regards to phenomenology. At first, many of the early supporters were skeptical that such an effort would weaken an already young discipline that was just making strides to produce rigorous research in the field. This was a needless concern. It was evident with the popularity and representation across the country in many schools and university that the opposite occurred, “...we may give credit to this popularizing way in which phenomenology entered the native American grain for it made use of the various cultures, ethnic and educational backgrounds of philosophers and

hence, encouraged the wealth of ideas which now characterize the identifiable community of phenomenological scholars...” (p. xxii).

The literature surrounding phenomenological research on pedagogical and professional identity is small and very diverse in regards to participants investigated. When looking at the research for this area of interest, one will find researchers exploring the phenomenon of being a novice teacher and her/his growth process (Greenebaum, 2009; Harris, 2001; Rollins, 2008; Stark, 1989), the lives of teachers and how they experience specific roles such as professional development, reading, and daily lives (Akura, 2004; Corliss, 2008; Fitzgerald, 2006; Roberts, 2009; White-Spiviel, 2003), and bringing voice to teacher identity (Siry, 2009; Sundeen, 2006). Although these studies indicate a need to do further phenomenological research relating to moving the “self” of the educator into the spotlight of teacher development, there is a void of phenomenological research specifically aimed at looking at novice reading teachers and how their experiences with professional growth created critical incidents that brought meaning to their identity (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994). Although most novice teachers experience similar concerns, a closer look at the novice reading teacher and the unique experiences they encounter can add to this growing body of knowledge.

Conducting a Husserlian phenomenology study was therefore an ideal choice for this study. Such a philosophical research methodology allowed me to capture the experiences that five novice reading teachers had during their novice years of teaching. Capturing these experiences through a narrative representation gave an identity to this phenomenon and a voice for the participants. It looked for a commonality or bond among these individuals and which carries transferability to others experiencing the same

phenomena of being a novice reading teacher. Additionally, staying true to phenomenological research, the participants took part in understanding their own stories and created new meaning from the study. This active involvement of being a co-researcher encouraged development of a more critical pedagogy of affirmation and transformation alongside the phenomenological research.

Theoretical Framework - Critical Pedagogy

The theory of critical pedagogy relies on the power of reflexive thought as a tool for exposing meaning of past experiences and for transforming identity and creating emancipatory opportunities. Critical Pedagogy is an extension of critical theory. As discussed by McLaren and Giarelli (1995), critical theory views inquiry for its impact on improving humanity through using knowledge as a change agent. Phenomenological research seeks to better define the knowledge gained from life experiences by interpreting the essence and giving it a voice. The voices collected from this study can become change agents for 21st century novice reading teachers. It is for this reason that I used a theoretical foundation of critical pedagogy to support this phenomenological study.

A Structure for Phenomenological Research Design

A researcher conducting a phenomenological investigation has a sole responsibility of eliciting descriptions from a specific phenomenon experienced by one or several participants who share the given phenomenon. This process is not just a collection of stories. Because phenomenological research is research of the human sciences, its goal is to unravel the structural meanings throughout all these experiences and find the common thread or essence that binds all the participants recounting together (Creswell, 2007; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Moustakas, 1994).

Creswell (2007) summarizes phenomenological research as follows:

1. Determine if the research question seeks to “understand several individuals’ common or shared experiences of a phenomenon” (p. 60).
2. Bracket out, or conduct an Epoche process, the researcher’s subjectivities to begin research with a “fresh” and open eagerness to receive new possibilities.
3. Collect data through the in-depth interview method. One or more interviews may be designed but data are not limited to the interview. Other forms like journal entries, artifacts, art, poetry, music or observations may be used for data.
4. Analyze the data by reviewing the interview transcriptions and searching out for “significant statements,” sentences, or quotes that provide understanding of the experiences which is referred to as Moustakas’ “horizontalization.”
Following this step, the researcher develops “clusters of meaning” from these significant statements and organizes these meanings into themes (p.61).
5. Use the clusters of meanings and themes to write a thematic description of the participant’s experience creating a textural and structural description of the phenomenon studied, or the essence of meaning for each of the participants.
6. Combine the essences from all the participants to write a description of the phenomenon that brings the experiences together. This would be the “essential” meaning to take away from the study that helps to better understand this lived-experience so that others may read and have a clearer conception of what it is like for someone to experience that particular phenomenon.

Conducting phenomenological research is like “peeling away the layers of an onion to get to the essence of the experience. So the assumption is that there is always a core, a nature of things, a shared understanding amongst a group of people, an essence that holds a phenomenon or experiences together” (Bhattacharya, 2007, p. 38). But it is also a dance, where the researcher and the participant take turns leading the discovery resulting in new understandings for all involved.

Role of the Research Participants

The research participants were five purposely selected novice reading educators actively teaching third through sixth grades in the public school system in the South, Southeast, and West Texas areas. Creswell (2007) suggests using this approach for its ability to provide multiply informed descriptions of the lived-experiences being explored (p. 126). Purposefully selecting my participants “maximizes differences at the beginning of the study, it increases the likelihood that findings will reflect differences or different perspectives—an ideal in qualitative research” (p. 126). For this study, a novice reading educator at the end of the first stage of development would be an individual who is in his/her fourth or fifth year of teaching (Fuller 1969; Katz, 1979; Snow et al., 2005). These teachers were designated to be a reading instructor by their school administration. Race, gender, ethnicity, and age were not considered for this study. I provided a flyer for distribution via email to individuals, colleagues, and campuses asking for suggestions of possible qualified individuals (Appendix A). Four participants were recommended by individuals in the field of education and one was acquired through the proper channels of a Southeast Texas school district.

From this initial sample, five participants representing different types of novice reading teachers from different teaching environments and different size school districts volunteered to participate in the study. Teachers of grades kindergarten through second grade were not included in this study as their classroom environment relies more heavily on literacy learning and training both pre and in-service would provide many opportunities to naturally have more experiences with literacy growth.

Each participant shared their detailed description of the phenomenon being investigated. As co-researchers, they investigated how the experience of being research participants influenced their own understanding of their pedagogy and professional identity.

Role of Researcher

As researcher, I held multiple roles throughout the project. I begin by participating in an *Epoche* recollection of my connectedness and subjectivities that surrounded the focus of the study. This allowed me to investigate my own understanding of identity and growth in relation to novice reading teachers and created a genealogy for these conceptions. I traced back to the roots of my passion for conducting this inquiry in an effort to remain nonjudgmental when acquiring new meanings that may or may not align with my prior knowledge.

I also held the role of investigator. It is through this role that I searched out and posed questions that took me into the lived-experience of being a novice reading teacher. While in this role, I am a navigator and listener as I move in and around the experience by observing and listening to the participant during the inquiry. Throughout this process, I held a simultaneous role as co-researcher and storyteller with the participant. We are

helping each other understand this experience of inquiry and to navigate through its meaning. To better capitalize on moments of meaning, I participated in informal analytic memo writing throughout the research process (Saldana, 2009). Reflexivity, or memo recording, allowed for me to track moments of meaning as I listened to my participants and while I analyzed the data. This process helped to remember thoughts and theories about pieces of data that added to the creation of the essence of the experience. By analytic memo writing, I provided myself opportunities to reflect on participants and the phenomenon being studied, my research questions, codes and themes that created the kernels of meaning and emergent patterns for the experience; as well as developed theories throughout the inquiry (pp. 32-40). The research process was not just a journey to retell an experience, but one to help build identity of the past, present and future for the novice reading teacher, as well as to add to my identity as a reading teacher researcher and a reading teacher myself.

Description of Research Sites

Conducting the exploration of the memory box (data source #1) and the in-depth interviews (data source #3) was held at a neutral site in proximity to the participants living or working environment. The literacy genealogy project (data source #2) was a self-administered project done at the participant's location of choice.

Data Collection Procedures

Data Source #1 Memory Box. The purpose of this data collecting instrument was to have the participants collect artifacts that exemplified moments in time where they took ownership of their pedagogy or gave identity to their professional self. The collection of the items created trigger moments for the participants allowing for a rich

source of data to be collected. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain that “viewing these documents in the context of [their life stories] constitutes something that might be called an archaeology of memory and meaning” (p. 114). Each participant was given a box that they filled with artifacts such as lesson plans, photos, student work, or books. An instruction sheet was given for reference (see Appendix B; photos of artifacts found in Appendix E). After three weeks, I met with each participant to have a conversation about the items (i.e., stories) in the box. The conversations were recorded and the transcripts were analyzed.

Three and a half hours of conversation was recorded for all five participants resulting in 77 pages of raw data for the memory box project.

Data Source #2 Literacy Genealogy Project (Eliciting conversations through created material objects). The purpose of this project was to get a clearer understanding of the ways these participants made meaning of their past experiences that have possibly influenced their identity as a novice reading teacher. Creating “professional biographies” captures a glimpse of the life histories these educators bring to form their identity by highlighting critical incidents (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994). Using data sources such as this one adds an additional perspective and candid alternative to have individuals express meanings for a phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). The following is an explanation of this data source:

1. Create a professional “tree” of your reading teacher life (see appendix C).

This project was created using a journaling format. Within a created form, participants were instructed to reflect on their past experiences.

The form represented a literacy genealogy “tree” with branches growing tall and roots growing under the soil. What were the roots that established this growth? What were some critical incidents that have affected and supported growth? These could have been positive or negative roots of people, things, or events/trainings that nurtured the development of an identity of being a reading teacher. Each participant was given a USB memory stick with the files loaded onto the device. The participants completed this on their own time and then sent the file back to me via email or mailed it back using a stamped envelope provided to them.

Raw data generated from this project ranged from 2 to 10 pages per participant of double spaced writing for a total of 39 double spaced pages of text for all five participants. The data from the “branches” section of the journaling project contributed to the *Textual Description* and the “roots” and “fruit” sections provided insightful information for completing the *Structural Description* for each participant.

Data Source #3 Final Interview. The participants were involved in one final interview that was used to further understand previous descriptions from the literacy genealogy project and the memory box. All interviews were digitally audio-recorded to ensure accuracy when transcribing the interviews and to help with alignment of any notes I may have made.

Following the suggested protocol for establishing an interview (Green, Camilli, & Elmore, 2006; Moustakas, 1994), I framed the basic questions which guided the interview from the previous experiences of the memory box and the literacy genealogy project conversations. Using a variety of questions aids in creating an environment where

the interviewee is speaking more than the interviewer (see Appendix F for interview questions).

At the completion of five interviews, two and a half hours of conversation were recorded resulting in 120 pages of raw data. The total amount of time with the participants from data source #1 and #3 was six hours resulting in 197 pages of raw data.

Data Recording/Analyzing Procedures

Analysis procedures for Data Sources #1, #2, and #3

The following summary of the inductive data analysis format is taken from Moustakas' (1994, pp.120-121) method of phenomenological data analysis:

1. Using the completed transcript (from interviews, literacy genealogy tree, and descriptive stories from the memory boxes), I identified statements of value that were relevant to the meaning of the experience. This is also called *horizontalization*. This is the beginning of the information reduction process. For each statement of value, there are distinguishable qualities of meaning for the particular phenomenon. Going through this process eliminated unneeded text of the experience and minimized it to a structural description of the experience. It can be thought of as chunking information.
2. From these statements, I reduced once again more textual descriptions to create a single "cluster of meaning." This can be a word or phrase that captured the essence of the statement and provided a code for the essence. One might ask, "Does it contain a moment of the experience that is a necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding it?" Or, "Is it possible

to abstract and label it? If so, it is a horizon of the experience” (p. 212). The cluster of meaning becomes a label for that statement.

3. Taking these labels, I then organized them into their commonalities. These groups of labels became an unnamed category. I moved these labels around until they begin to form a grouping. From each grouping, a theme emerged. Using the themes, I constructed an *Individual Textual Description* for each interviewee. This would be a way of explaining *what* each participant experienced from the phenomenon. Following the *Textual Description* is the *Structural Description* which formed the possible factors or meaning for *how* the experience occurred through reflection on the data and references from notes (pp. 97-100). Moustakas’s refers to this as the “imaginative variation.”
4. From each *Individual Textual and Structural Descriptions*, I then developed a *Composite Description* representing the meanings and essences of the phenomenon for the entire research group based on the data from the memory box conversations, the literacy genealogy tree journaling project and final interview. This involved taking the codes, categories, and themes from all data sources and replicating the same procedures to create the meaning of this lived-experience for all participants. This was written as a thematic narrative description re-presenting the phenomenon for this study.

The catalyst for this inquiry revolved around how five novice reading teacher constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identities during their first four to five years of teaching. Each of the conversations elicited through the collection of artifacts from their memory box as well as the interview

allowed me to reveal, through thick descriptions, the essence of how these participants made meaning of themselves throughout their novice teaching years. During the interaction and analysis of all three of the sources of data from the participants, I developed an understanding for what the essence of being a novice reading educator was for my participants.

An additional motive navigating my inquiry was to uncover what critical incidents occurred for these novice reading teachers that helped shape their pedagogy and professional identity. The literacy genealogy tree and the memory box project allowed for the participants to pinpoint specific occurrences and create conversation that enhanced opportunities for elaboration of these incidents.

The reflective nature of the member-check opportunities assisted in uncovering the impact the experience of this phenomenological research project had on the five participants and allowed me to address the second question of this research.

Data Presentation

Narrative re-presenting. Many in the field of qualitative research have chosen a narrative re-presentation as a way of framing life-stories of teachers (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986; Bullough, 1990; Diamond, 1993; Kelchtermans, 1993; Rippon & Martin, 2006). Narrative re-presenting allows for cycles and patterns of the experience to ebb and flow as they did in real life. Metaphoric representation takes the essence of life-stories and allows the reader to make their own connections (or transfer) through their own experiences with the understanding of the metaphor. Phenomenological research seeks to better define the knowledge gained from life experiences by interpreting the essence and

giving it a voice through a natural narration of the experience. Individuals synthesize a phenomenon by connecting it to their past experiences and opinions to validate or contradict its meaning (Husserl, 1973). Metaphors help this transfer by forming concrete understandings for the experience (Munby, 1986). A narrative re-presentation was selected as the most appropriate mode of presenting data derived from human life stories. Through a narrative approach of presenting the data, the unique plot characteristics of my participants' experiences were retold as they unfolded from the beginning, the middle, and finally at the end of their novice years teaching reading (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Strategies for Establishing Trustworthiness

Angen (2000) refers to the validation of qualitative research as being deeper than finality as it is also about having “done something well, having made an effort that is worthy of trust and written up convincingly. Doing effective interpretive research requires that we do something meaningful that furthers our understanding and stimulates us to more informed and, hopefully, more humane thought and action” (p. 392).

Triangulation of the data sources which included the artifacts from the memory box, the literacy genealogy tree, and the interview was used to create the codes and themes of the lived-experience. The essence revealed was used to help with the transferability of the study to the readers. As I can only present the experiences of being a novice reading teacher for these participants at this moment in time, it will be the reader's responsibility to use the thick descriptions provided to make the decision of whether this study's finding can be transferred to her/his own experiences (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Having applied a critical pedagogy lens to the formation of this inquiry, I

would look beyond the collection of data sources as merely being triangulated but additionally that they have been crystallized and have morphed into an agent of change themselves. Richardson and St. Pierre (2000) propose that:

The central imaginary is the crystal [rather than the triangle], which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, and are altered, but are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, and arrays casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of repose—not triangulation but rather crystallization . . . Crystallization, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of “validity;” we feel how there is no single truth, and we see how texts validate themselves. Crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, and thoroughly partial understanding of the topic (p. 963).

In addition to using triangulation (and crystallization) and creating thick description, peer debriefing and member checks were employed to further the trustworthiness and rigor of the study. Following each interaction with the data sources, the transcribed and coded analysis of the data were presented to the participants for their discussion. The participants described a deep sense of awareness about their growth as a reading teacher during their novice years as a result of participating in the study and commented on the pride they felt for reading about their accomplishments. Additionally, a fellow phenomenology researcher was consulted to help give perspective towards the procedures of coding and creating the essence for these lived-experiences.

The three specific interactions with the participants (memory box conversation, literacy tree conversation and final interview) and ongoing dialogue via email and phone conversations provided a prolonged exposure of four to six months with the participants that built trust and added value to the study (Creswell, 2007). I participated in an *epoche* writing of my preconceived biases relating to the research as well as kept reflexive notes which allowed for growth in the understanding of the research question.

Ethical Issues

As with all research, it is of the utmost importance that the most crucial element of protecting the participants is keep in check. At no time during the interview did these individuals feel that they were in a vulnerable state, or that they were put in a vulnerable position unknowingly. It was made clear that all responses were to be confidential and that any personal comments that may indicate vulnerability were discarded from the data. Therefore, I made all expectation of the study and the participant's role as clear and understood as possible. For this study, this was accomplished through both written and oral communicative forms (Appendix D). To ensure transparency, a detailed summary of the procedures helped to ensure full disclosure of the intent, purpose, and expectations of the research project. This summary was given to the participants prior to accepting an invitation to participate. Additionally, I verbally reviewed the disclosure document with the participants before obtaining consent to participate in the investigation and answered questions that arose. A final measure to uphold ethical principals was held through periodic debriefings with the participants regarding the data analysis. By allowing the participant to agree or disagree with the textual interpretations of the descriptions expressed, misconceptions or misunderstandings related to the data were cleared away

and the participants were given a space for their voice to be heard throughout the research process (Green, Camilli, & Elmore, 2006; Moustakas, 1994).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I provided a historical and theoretical description for employing a phenomenological research framework with a critical pedagogy lens to explore the ways in which five South, Southeast, and West Texas reading teachers constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identities from their experiences during their novice years of teaching. I discussed the data collecting method of using the three sources: memory box, mini-journaling project, and final interview to gather rich descriptions of the experience. I then described in detail the data analysis process of phenomenology and explained the rationale for using a narrative re-presentation for retelling the stories. The following chapter will present the analysis of the data collected for this study and share the *Essence* of being a novice reading teacher for the five participants.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to explore the ways in which five reading teachers, in grades three through six, have constructed a personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identities from their experiences during their novice years of teaching. Through listening and reflecting, my goal was to learn from the five participants' experiences in order to conceptualize the essence of being a novice reading teacher. This chapter presents each participant's experiences as they were told through the three projects (a) artifacts collected in their Memory Box, (b) mini-journaling about their experiences, and (c) a final individual interview.

Prior to the first conversation with the participants, I used my personal Memory Box to build an understanding of the first project. I showed several options that might be included in the box that would be used to guide a conversation. This first meeting also laid a foundation for trust as I shared parts of my identity with them. I then gave the participants formal instructions about the Memory Box as well as a crate in which to collect their artifacts. The Memory Box project was intended to help the participants claim ownership of memories through the collection of artifacts related to their novice years of teaching (see Appendix E for figures containing photographs of artifacts for each participant).

Following the Memory Box conversations, I presented to each participant the Reading Teacher Genealogy Journaling Project. This project was put on a USB drive on which the participants saved their journal entries. We discussed expectations for each part

of the journaling project: The Roots, The Branches, and The Fruit (see Appendix C for project description). The journaling project was intended to help present an opportunity for the participants to reflect on the critical incidents that have impacted their novice years teaching and to use their own voices to tell the stories. It also provided some background understanding of each participant prior to their novice years of teaching reading. I left each participant with a self-addressed envelope in which the USB drive was mailed back to me once the project was completed and asked for a copy sent via email as well. Only the data collected from The Branches section were used for analysis as it specifically spoke to the research questions. The two remaining sections helped to provide insight for the *Structural Description* of the analysis.

Once data had been received, a meeting for the final interview was arranged. All participants were asked the same questions (see Appendix F for list of questions) that focused on providing detail about their novice years of being a reading teacher. All three data sources were designed for exploration of the following research questions:

2. What was the essence of being a novice reading educator for these participants?
 - a. How have the participants constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development from their experiences during their novice teaching years?
 - b. How have the participants constructed personal understanding of their professional identities from their experiences during their novice teaching years?
 - c. What critical incidents have occurred that have helped shape their pedagogy and identity?

- d. Did the reflective descriptions reference any form of critical pedagogy?
3. How did this phenomenological research experience impact their identity and pedagogical ownership?

After the two data sources were transcribed into a textual format (data source 2 was created in textual format), all three data sources were separately analyzed in the same manner as described here. I read and reread the texts, made notes, and highlighted significant aspects of the conversation. Moustakas (1994) refers to this process of horizontalization as reducing and eliminating pieces of the experience to uncover its invariant constituents or the threads of the experience that were constant or unchanging (pp. 84-97). From these significant personal statements, I then formed clusters of meaning that provided vivid descriptions of the participant's experiences. After these clusters of meaning were put onto slips of paper, I shuffled them around a table top over the course of several days until they merged almost magnetically into categories. When I looked more closely at each category, I began a process of uncovering the layers of meaning to arrive at the core of the conversation. This led to the formation of the core and main themes that captured textually the personal understanding of the participant's pedagogical development and professional identity during their novice years based on these three data sources. This information was organized into outline form. When all three data source outlines were compiled, they were merged to form the overall outline of the experience of being a novice reading teacher and written in narrative form for the *Textual Description*. A textual description describes the nature and essence of the experience of being a novice reading teacher (or "what" the experience is). It provides a clear image of events that helped shape these years for the participants including

providing opportunities for the participants' "voice" to be heard as well as establishing authenticity through the inclusion of personal statements (pp. 133-135).

From the *Textual Description* of these experience emerged the *Structural Description* which illuminated the possibilities for the origins of the core themes. Following this phenomenological reduction process, the *Structural Description* attempts to provide insight into "how" this experience came to be. Using Moustakas' design for Imaginative Variation, I formed possible factors or meanings through reflection on the data and references from my notes for the experience to have occurred (pp. 97-100). The "Roots" and "Fruit" sections of the journaling data source provided additional insight for this section. Concluding the analysis, I compiled all five individual *Textual* and *Structural Descriptions* and merged them into one data source (following the same analysis procedures) to uncover the overall essence of being a novice reading teacher as for the whole group. This became the *Composite Description* and the *Essence* (pp. 121, 137-143).

Participant Demographics

During the course of the three projects, each participant completed a demographic survey. The survey was sent via email as an interactive digital file and as a hard copy to be mailed. The participants chose which format to complete. The survey, presented in Appendix G, asked 14 questions relating to the participant's age, race, ethnicity, education, years in the teaching profession, and specific questions relating to the professional development as a reading teacher. Questions relating to school size, population and socio-economic status were also asked to aid highlighting diversity among participants. The intent of this survey was to gather information regarding the

participants' teacher preparation, teaching environment, training in reading, and educational background. The following sections present information gathered by the survey. Specific participant demographics can be found in Appendix H.

Ethnicity, age, gender. Three of the five participants reported they were of Hispanic ethnicity (60%) with one of those who reported both Hispanic and African American ethnicities (20%). The remaining two participants reported to be Caucasian (40%). One area that was not diversely represented was gender as all participants were female. For comparison, the state of Texas demographic representation was as follows (TEA PEIMS, 2011): Female educators made up 76.95% of teacher population, Caucasian 63.95%, Hispanic 22.89%, Black/African American 9.28%, Asian 1.25%, and Alaskan Indian/Native American 1.22%. The age span for all five participants ranged between the thirties and forties. Specifically, one teacher was in her early thirties, two in their mid to upper thirties, one in her early forties, and one in her upper forties.

Education. One participant obtained her teacher certification through a university undergraduate program. Four participants obtained their teaching certificates through an Alternative Teacher Certification program, and three of these held previous careers before entering the classroom. For comparison, in 2010 in the state of Texas for female teachers, 84.7% became certified through the university undergraduate route and 69.9 % became certified through an alternative certification route (SBEC, 2011). Four of the five participants reported to have continued past their undergraduate degree, with three holding a Master's degree (Special Education, Reading Specialist, and Education/Curriculum and Instruction).

Full-time teacher experience. Three participants concluded their fourth year as “Teacher of Record” during the course of this study, with one of these three having been in the school setting for eleven years but not as a certified teacher. Two teachers were ending their fifth year but one of these two did not count the first year of the Alternative Teacher Certification program as an official year which would have been six years total. All teachers have been responsible for teaching language arts curriculum since their first year as a full-time teacher.

School configuration and demographics. The five participants also represented various areas of Texas geographic zones, different school district sizes, and school populations. Three teachers taught in school districts located in the South Texas region, one teacher taught in East Texas, and one taught in the West Texas region. These school districts represented various sizes based on student population. Three participants who taught in large school districts (based on four or more high schools) taught in schools with populations of 453, 515, and 854 students. The two participants who taught in small rural districts had 375 and 70 students in their schools. The populations of these schools were diverse as well based on the percentage of students who qualified for the free and reduced lunch program. One teacher taught in a school where only 33% of students qualified for this program, three teachers taught in schools where 60-75% of the students qualified and one teacher taught in a school where 96% of the student population qualified.

Professional training. Four participants indicated that within the past four to six years they have on average spent four to seven days a year on professional training specifically for reading or writing development and one participant reported spending

eight or nine days a year. Four participants have initiated self-directed training and have used their local State-run Educational Service Center for workshop related events. Four participants have been provided district-wide training. Three participants were provided campus training and have sought out private consultant training to develop their understanding of teaching reading. Two participants enrolled in graduate level course study relating to reading instruction. Three of the participants rated their training during the novice years as “mostly” useful and two rated their training “extremely” useful.

INDIVIDUAL TEXTUAL AND STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTIONS

The remaining sections of this chapter present the individual experiences for each of the five participants. A synthesized title begins each participant’s analysis which captures the essence of being a novice reading teacher for that participant. This is followed by a statement of both the core themes and their subsequent supporting themes which provide the substance for the narrative *Textual Description* that follows. The *Structural Description* completes each participant section. The chapter ends with the *Composite Description* describing the overall essence of being a novice reading teacher for the combined five participants.

Experiences of Novice Reading Teachers

Alice

Alice experienced her novice years of teaching reading as an “Enlightened Observer”

Following Moustakas outline of Phenomenological analysis of data, I combined the core themes of the three data sources and merged overlapping and repetitive themes. What remained became the basis for constructing Alice’s *Textual Description* of the experience (or “what” the experience was) of being a novice reading teacher, these were

(a) The positive and negative impact of the teacher’s environment shaped pedagogical understanding and professional identity and (b) Used a three-dimensional approach to understanding teaching: looked inward/deeper, outward/boarder, and beyond. Supporting details followed each of the two core themes. For Core Theme 1 the supporting themes were: “Hardships: Negative critical incidents in the school environment,” “Positive critical incidents in the school environment,” and “Positive Critical Incidents outside of the school environment.” For Core Theme 2 the supporting theme was: A strong observational trait aids the understanding of students, pedagogy, professionalism and self. The *Structural Description*, which presents the possibilities for “how” the experience came to be during her novice years of teaching reading, completes the analysis section for Alice.

Textual Description by themes

Core Theme 1: The positive and negative impact of the teacher’s environment shaped pedagogical understanding and professional identity

Within Alice’s environment the hardships followed by stability and combined with a developed reading instruction knowledge base, have created opportunities for pedagogical awareness and professional identity.

Hardships: negative critical incidents in the school environment. The experience of being a novice reading teacher for Alice unfortunately began in a rough and unstable environment which created uncertainty in the first three years. Due to the district’s “displacement” policy, Alice was moved around to different classrooms to meet the student count of a classroom several times. Such constant movement was stressful and harmful to building a teacher identity, “by my third year of teaching, it was already my

fifth classroom...and I'm like... I can't do this too much anymore!" The constant movement had a troubling impact on her pedagogical development. On top of the traditional "survival" mode that novice teachers encounter, there were new students, new grade levels and new schools to become acquainted with, "moving around so much, I obviously didn't know where they [students] needed to be ... I honestly didn't know this child was behind until May... and by then it's too late to identify somebody as having an issue." This inconsistency was professionally as well as personally stressful because Alice looked at the students' success as her responsibility, "I felt guilty because ...well, it's my fault they didn't catch on." The excessive mobility coupled with frustration with district policy created a negative professional environment which challenged her motivation for staying in the classroom. Ownership of her environment was difficult to establish. From the excessive mobility she "learned not to get comfortable, too attached, or truly unpacked until the end of September."

Frequent mobility and lack of belonging became a negative critical incident for Alice making it nearly impossible to create a space where an identity could form. The more veteran teachers at her second school lacked the understanding of how to welcome and initiate a novice teacher into the grade level community, "some of them just didn't know how to be. It's not like they were trying to be a bad influence or bring me down, it's just they honestly did not know how to nurture a new teacher." When Alice transferred to the second school, the grade level of teachers had been a team for quite a while. They worked off of previous lessons and viewed planning as a social outlet rather than a collaborative opportunity.

The next grade level placement was to fourth grade. This grade level had been a team of three who were set in their routines. There were not enough resources for Alice's classroom making it a challenge to provide a successful environment. Administrative support was weak as well and collaboration was difficult. Conflict developed when it was expressed for the whole team to work together and collaborate. With an emphasis on improving test scores, conference time was sacrificed to provide more tutoring with students. What Alice acquired from these experiences was the understanding of isolation and the loss of passion that had been developed in college while learning the art of teaching, "I truly learned not to care that year. Our new administration was big on pushing that every classroom in a grade level should be doing the exact same thing at the same time. It wasn't possible!" It was best to just seek isolation. This was the path of least resistance. What began as a negative factor of Alice's development (isolation and individualism) soon became the fuel for finding an identity and developing her pedagogical awareness. Although these hardships aimed to derail pedagogical and professional development, Alice was assertive and persistent. If her school environment did not provide what she needed, she searched out for other sources of support.

Positive critical incidents in the school environment. Alice looked for support, mentorship, and guidance to help make the transition into owning her personal understanding of teaching. This was something that she had experienced during the first year she taught. Her first year as a classroom teacher was her most supportive year. Taking over a classroom for a previous teacher, she had encouragement and support from the staff and administration. Her mentor was nonjudgmental and knew how to be a pillar of support, "I am still grateful that my neighbor would just walk in anytime and check on

me without being judgmental.” These supportive colleagues made a large impact of her understanding of professionalism. From this experience, she learned about team work. Alice attributed the success of this rough first year also to the grade level. Second grade was a non-testing grade level for the state of Texas. She felt that being in such a grade level allowed her more pedagogical freedom to focus on experimenting with the various reading methods learned at the university rather than hours spent on test-taking strategies.

Having lost this positive critical incident of mentorship and support the rest of her novice years, the most critical of incidents that helped to shape her pedagogical development and build confidence were stability and consistency. Alice shared her experience of receiving letters from her students and photos of her classes the past two years. It was her representation of having developed ownership to a specific classroom and grade level. Her fourth and fifth year teaching “had a lot of stability, a lot of predictability, so that helped. You know same team, same room, same number of kids, same resources.” The experience of consistency allowed for the construction of routines and increased confidence that she knew what to look for in her students such as how she identified weaknesses in reading ability. The physical room became a positive critical incident for Alice as well. In that room, she created a sanctuary within her walls where she “was able to connect with my kids and feel safe with them in the small confines of my classroom. That year I learned to stay to myself and do my own thing.” For Alice, being a novice reading teacher meant that she made isolation and individualism powerful tools. From the positive experience of stability, she grew more confident in how she understood student reading ability as well as how their needs were better served. This understanding, she felt, better prepared her for future transitions between grade levels.

An additional benefit from the stability Alice experienced towards the end of her novice years of teaching reading was the opportunity for incorporation of technology. She became a front-runner for technology at her school through the use of a SMART Board [A SMART Board interactive whiteboard is a large touch-enabled surface connected to a computer that allows the user to write, erase, move objects and control applications with their finger. Teachers can create content lessons that transforms student learning and increases engagement]. Alice's classroom was assigned a SMART Board as an additional tool for improving instruction. She identified herself as technologically savvy and included the SMART Board when she made pedagogical decisions, "I love it...I live by it... That's very much who I am...It's been a very positive thing for me, too, especially to be one of the first ones to get the new toy!" She used the SMART Board when she created reading lessons and the experience not only impacted the way she taught but also the way her students learned. Her lessons became more professional and interactive when she incorporated the ability for manipulation of prepared and student-created content directly on the screen or when she created "game-like" lessons which motivated her students. The success resulted in more academic freedom,

My administrators know that I don't follow the workbooks and the textbooks to a "t" or follow the plans to a "t." I will do the same lesson but I'll do it in a different way. I'll do it more visually since I have the SMART Board.

As a result of being in this classroom for consecutive years, Alice's professional identity was nurtured by technology.

Positive Critical Incidents outside of the school environment. Part of creating a teacher identity meant she developed an understanding for reading pedagogy. Alice found

another sanctuary in graduate school where she studied for a Master's in Reading. Here she used and created a professional space in which she bridged and challenged the way she understood reading theory. Although this was a positive place for Alice, she found that while her classes extended her preconceived understanding of reading instruction they also contradicted the school's pedagogical philosophy. Another awareness that she developed was the confidence to apply her new extended reading theory into the classroom,

That year I was also working on my Master's in Reading. I had Dr. ---'s class once a week. I stayed in the back of the room and listened. During class I felt like everything I was being told to do at work was wrong, but I felt helpless to change anything. I was able to see I wasn't the only exhausted, frustrated, and upset person. I would take what I would learn in class and use it to directly work with my students.

Alice's experience in graduate school strengthened her pedagogical awareness which she used in her classroom despite fear of repercussion from the administration. As she grew to recognize and identify students' needs, and to provide sound reading instruction, the administration lessened its grip on her which allowed for more academic freedom. In addition to academic freedom, Alice had a sense of identity,

For the past three years I have been in that same classroom with the same team. I have had stability. I can recognize what the standards say the students should know by a certain time of the year. I can finally identify who is behind and who is ahead. I have resources I can use from year to year. I finally don't feel so lost.

The information gained from graduate school was crucial for Alice. It was a life preserver during a time of little support and a lot of frustration. Graduate school was not the only outlet that Alice went to for professional development. Her district provided training through Literacy Coaches for implementation of Balanced Literacy. Alice began to own her pedagogy and see success,

I was doing the reading classes here [university] and the balanced literacy training, just doing a lot of the small group and one-on-one . . . They were on grade level by the end of the year, but a lot of that was because I had freedom to do it.

Having completed the experience of the Master's program, she became aware that it added to her understanding and ownership of pedagogy. This awareness developed a conflict between the knowledge she used when she assessed students and what they needed with the knowledge of the unrealistic and disconnected expectation that the district held for both the students and the teaching. If it were not for the academic freedom she was given, this conflict she experienced would more than likely have derailed her development as a teacher. The conflicts and contradictions during these years shaped Alice's reading philosophy and teacher identity. Although she viewed herself as a General Education teacher, she also placed reading as an essential thread holding all the subjects together,

I have my Master's in reading. That's what I'm certified in, but I'm a general ed. I'm an elementary teacher. We teach everything, basically. I haven't been teaching everything for the last two years. I've been... just the reading, language arts, social studies – we've team taught. So I haven't taught math and science in

two years, but even still, I still feel like we do everything. That's why I got my Master's in reading because that first year of teaching ... [proved that] reading makes a difference in all their subjects.

Her philosophy rested on the belief that reading helped the students understand the bigger picture of the content, not just the words.

The experiences, both positive and negative, that Alice had during her novice years of teaching reading made her confident in how she understood her professional identity. She described her style as laid back and attributed this to the creation of a positive and supportive learning environment for her students,

They're less frustrated when you're not growling at them – you're not on them. When you keep your voice...when you're just kind of laid back and they don't feel the tension from you when they're tense, they tend to relax and loosen up and work for you. And they'll just eventually work for themselves. They work through the frustration, but you have to be calm and laid back. Plus, it really helps the discipline in classroom management just to stay calm.

Core Theme 2: Used a three dimensional approach to understanding teaching: looked inward/deeper, outward/broader, and beyond

Alice shared many experiences that reflected a strong observational trait for both professional and pedagogical growth. When she looked outward or more broadly at the real world experiences of her students as well as herself; and looked inward or deeper at issues involving pedagogy, her students and their parents, she was able to adapt to the imposed restrictions and made sound pedagogical decisions. She used this strong

observational trait when she helped her students look deeper and beyond the curriculum she taught.

A strong observational trait aided the understanding of students and pedagogy.

Teaching in a low-socioeconomic location where her “students are labeled ‘at-risk’ for simply living there,” Alice observed a need to better understand her student population. Focusing on boys specifically, she voluntarily attended a training for and read the book *Hear Our Cry, Boys in Crisis* (2004). She spoke very passionately and sympathetically of this topic surrounding boys. Alice has seen the shift in expectation for boys recently in her classroom and events in her personal life validate this understanding, “right now, boys are lagging behind academically. They’re not in college as much... they’re the faster ones to go get a job, so it’s [the professional piece of literature] just to remember to try to take care of my boys.” She paid close attention to the way her students’ parents addressed this issue as well, almost making excuses or expectation that the boys were not as good at reading as the girls. This made her even more observant about the pieces of literature she used in her classroom. She selected books that meet the needs of both populations, “they [parents] tend to kind of train them [boys] or brainwash them, ‘you need to be more science or technical than reading,’ and so I’m trying to bring out of them to love a story.”

Having a better understanding of her students’ needs helped Alice to be critical of the curriculum she used in her classroom. She sought to better equip her more disadvantaged students for the real world when she made connections to the literature and life lessons. The works of Dr. Seuss was a tool she used to help students understand that almost everything had a deeper meaning and it was important to look beyond the surface

to apply what one learned. Dr. Seuss books were an excellent source and helped students make sense out of the nonsense of life situations, “I have an obsession with Dr. Seuss, so I have several Dr. Seuss books. I would like a full Dr. Seuss room some day, and I try to explain to the kids that most of his stories have such a bigger meaning to them.” Through her shared lived-experience of when she taught from a Dr. Seuss book, the ownership, passion and concern resonated how she helped her students transfer school knowledge to life knowledge,

So I read *Oh, the Places You Will Go* (1960) which they’ve all seen. They’ve all kind of read, skimmed through- but I did it [read] slowly and bit by bit and, you know, trying to plan for the future and a lot of the kids at the school ... it's the here and now and I know that's typical for kids but honestly they don't see how all the office referrals or all the fighting is going to affect you in the future. You need to learn how to get out of this attitude and mood so that you can work with people later on — you know, and some of their parents can't see that either. So that book, I was really drilling to them about their future and all the different stages in life. How hard things are going to be. How great things are going to be. And at the end it's like okay, you've got to pick what your job is going to be. What do you want to do even if you're a boxer? Do you need to go to college or not? And for a lot of kids it's like “oh, I'm just going to be a boxer. Well, you need to manage your money don't you? — or are you going to trust it to somebody else to spend it all?” So, you know, it was like okay, “some college at least” . . . So that was the whole theme of the lesson, so they walked around the rest of the day with “Cat in the

Hat” name tags, but it said what their job was. That was fun. It was a lot of fun.

They were all gravitating to the book for the rest of the year.

For reasons such as this, Alice became very attached to specific authors. She selected pieces of literature that provided opportunities for teaching life lessons, “I have gotten more attached to certain authors as time’s gone on ‘cause I’ve seen which ones I can really use in my room. You know, in just everyday lessons and everyday activities.” Through the use of Dr. Seuss books, she presented less intimidating material but still helped the students see the bigger picture in the story (especially for the boys).

Reflecting on her own personal experiences contributed to a feeling that she better understood her students and pedagogy. Alice understood her own learning style to be visual and interactive, and used this knowledge as she made pedagogical decisions, specifically with the use of technology. As a reader herself, she struggled with the one-dimensional element of black and white reading as well as the need for motion in learning, “I have an issue with the contrast but I can read a computer screen for hours...I’m a quiet person but I fidget and I know that it’s killer for my kids to just sit there all day, too.” By incorporating the SMART board, she connected with the students’ need for multiple learning styles as well as her need for multiple and interactive teaching styles.

A strong observational trait aided the understanding of professionalism and self.

Alice became observant of her students’ learning needs when she observed her own personal lived-experiences. She drew her professional strength from her deductive and rational abilities. These traits helped build relationships with her students, their parents and her “teaching” self. From the very beginning, being observant helped shape her

identity. During her first year, she paid close attention to the type of support and looked inward and outward as she filled her developmental need. Being deductive and rational attributed to her personal understanding of herself as that “laid back” teacher and it brought ownership to her professionalism. Alice was proud of her relationship with her students’ parents and how well she kept them informed. She stayed calm and explained situations, so she opened channels of communication that lead to positive and supportive learning environments. She shared the experience of a gift of a bottle of perfume she received from a parent at the end of the school year. This gift was crucial in validating her approach with both students and parents, “I feel very professional when talking to the parents, especially if I’m trying to help them understand that there might be a bigger issue going on with their child...and what could actually be happening and try to be on their side.” Helping the parents see the “bigger picture” was consistent with her teaching philosophy. Alice resolved to look deeper at the student problem rather than just the surface level solutions.

Her strong observational trait helped her to also see the “bigger picture” of education and her development as a teacher. Alice realized that there was a “huge disconnect” of student expectations that the country, state, and district had for grade level to grade level as well as her specific student population which was considered low socio-economic, “there needs to be a more unified system from state to state. Our kids are very mobile. They come from everywhere, and especially when they come out of state, it’s... they’re lost from what we need them to do.” She saw another disconnect from what she had learned to what was expected of her as well, “everything that I learned here [university] in class is like that’s not what they’re telling us to do at work.”

Regardless of this conflict, her observational skills helped as she became a more prepared teacher. Her experiences with parents, students, positive and negative support, trainings, and graduate school enabled her to better identify learning gaps and adjust her teaching style when needed. Even participation in this phenomenological research project helped her to look inward and outward to better approach teaching expectations and incorporate more of her reading pedagogical knowledge,

I've realized that this coming year I'm kind of going into it [moving to a different grade level again] with a bad attitude . . . and I realize I need to get over it...

because I will have more small groups, more time individually with the kids.

Knowing all this about herself she even felt that someday, because of her experiences during her novice years teaching reading, she explored thoughts of future mentorship herself.

Structural Description

The essence of Alice's novice years of teaching reading was fueled by observing the deeper meaning in her students, in education and in herself as a teacher. She approached being a reading teacher with a deductive, observational, and laid back manner because it allowed her to get a glimpse of the whole story; it allowed her openness and flexibility to new situations as well as to the hidden possibilities.

Alice had numerous experiences that set the stage for developing these traits. As a student in grade school, she tutored younger children at her school. In her teenage years she worked with children at a daycare and worked summers at the Women's Shelter. Additionally, she observed her own family members make their career choices and go through their hardships which included negative experiences with nursing and her sister's

unsuccessful student teaching experience which was followed by an experience with cancer. When she tutored the younger students, she made mental notes about how they responded to her and how she was viewed as being responsible and independent by the students and teachers of the school. During her early college experience, Alice used all these observations to make a decision to enter into education rather than nursing. She came to the conclusion that “working with children was somewhat easy for me at that point. I changed my major to early childhood education.” During these experiences, Alice was an enlightened observer and absorbed the life-knowledge learned from these individuals.

Reflection on this “life knowledge” explained her connection to literature that helped the reader seek deeper meaning. One might say her novice years emulated a “deeper meaning” like the ones found in the Dr. Seuss books she used in her classroom. Like the Cat from the *Cat In the Hat* (1957), she approached the controlling environment (or the “fish” played by the administrative setting) which seemed to always tell her “No! No! You should not do that!” with a laid back approach which allowed her to present “Thing One” and “Thing Two” to solve problems with such approaches like the SMART Board or Balanced Literacy. In *Green Eggs and Ham* (1960) she was Sam who sought to convince through persistence that reading philosophies learned during her years of study and professional development should be “tried” as they may “like” the effectiveness and success it would provide for her students. It seemed that her own career path paralleled that of the boy from *Oh, The Places You’ll Go* (1960) with bumps, slumps and bangs she overcame as well as “waiting places” and “playing lonely games” she managed. If the “deeper meaning” of this novice reading teacher’s path is to continue on course and

complete its journey, the essence of being a deductive and strong observational traveler will help her to find her way and enlighten her teaching and her student's lives.

Rose

Rose experienced her novice years of teaching reading as "Living Literature"

Following Moustakas outline of Phenomenological analysis of data, I combined the core themes of the three data sources and merged any overlapping and repetitive themes. What remained became the basis for constructing the *Individual Textual Description* of the experience of being a novice reading teacher, these were (a) Drew strength from both tangible and intangible relationships between family, students, colleagues and staff, (b) Nurtured an empowering environment for success and identity to flourish for self and students through praxis, and (c) Professional and personal "voice" was valued building awareness for ownership of pedagogy and identity. Supporting details followed each of the three core themes. For Core Theme 1 the supporting themes were: "Family as a significant critical incident before and during novice years of teaching," "Professional identity through current and past affirmation from students and parents," and "Channeled motivation for growth through tangible and intangible recognition of success from students, colleagues and from self." For Core Theme 2 the supporting themes were: "Taught using life-experiences, literature and metaphors as an example for having passion in learning and living," and "Provided an empowering environment for student success and identity to flourish." For Core Theme 3 the supporting themes were: "Professional identity was valued through the symbiotic relationship involving respect between self and colleagues," and "Pride for pedagogical development and self-directed growth." The *Structural Description*, which presents the

possibilities for “how” the experience came to be during her novice years of teaching reading, completes the analysis section for Rose.

Textual Description by themes

Core Theme 1: Drew strength from both tangible and intangible relationships between family, students, colleagues, and staff

Family as a significant critical incident before and during novice years of teaching. The experience of being a novice reading teacher for Rose relied heavily on her family. Her family was a significant critical incident throughout her life and inspired the foundation for her passion in teaching. Her parents, sister, and aunt consistently served as motivational and inspirational factors for becoming the most “whole hearted” teacher she could have been during these years, “I remember being in her [aunt in Mexico] classroom. When I was there during summer school, I remember thinking, ‘this is what I want to do’ because she was just that kind of whole hearted teacher.” This kind of influence impacted her decisions she made as a classroom teacher.

The personal narratives that Rose shared showed how integral literacy was in her life even at an early age, “she [aunt] would write to me and she would send cursive samples...or she would draw a clown with geometric shapes...here I am, a baby in diapers, and she is already teaching me all these things ... you just want to be like people like that.” Such artifacts as photos, letters, and diplomas represented the influence and power drawn from her family. “And here is one of my super motivators [shows photo], that is my sister, and my parents, when we got our master’s degree...” Rose’s experiences visiting family in Mexico and the intermingling of family members who leaned on each other consequently developed positive personal and professional growth.

Professional identity through current and past affirmation from students and parents. Rose's novice years teaching reading were filled with the pleasure of having her students' affection exhibited in various ways. The school where Rose taught was located in a low socio-economic area of town and served students who ranged from mono-lingual household [one language, specifically Spanish, spoken in the home] environments to little or no support from the home. Regardless, Rose's students repeatedly showed their support for her as she showed her support for them. Past and present students came to her classroom before or after school, gave updates, or left notes of affirmation regarding her positive influence, "You know, they are fifth-graders now and I had them two years ago in third-grade and they still come by ... they come and they share with me." Rose kept every letter from her students like medals of Honor. They were dear to her and "just these little notes" became inspirational treasures for Rose and fueled her continued devotion towards teaching,

This is one that made me cry [showing a letter from a student]. "Dear Mrs. Rose, Thank you for teaching me so much. You were the best part of my three years at --- school. I love it when you told me, 'Do your best. You can do it. I have seen you do it before.' You are awesome. I like what you did! You are fabulous!"

Equally as empowering were the letters from parents; especially those who she struggled with for support,

You know how sometimes you get a parent that you just... you know...you know the parents...it was a struggling year. But at the end of the year, I saved [shows letter] it because I got a thank you note from that parent and it was just sweet. It said, "A special thank you to all that you have done, all your patience, kind words

of encouragement, for taking the time to answer numerous emails and sitting in meetings with us. Our frustrations at times were never meant towards you, rather the system. We truly appreciate having you as one of ----'s great teachers.” So... this was a tough year and it was always “your fault” and then you get this note...

The symbiotic affirmative need between students, parents, and Rose became an unwavering symbol for “who” Rose was as a teacher and the strength she possessed. She used this as she engaged her understanding about who she was as a teacher. When students responded positively to her teaching, she made mental notations that redefined her understanding of being a reading teacher.

Channeled motivation for growth through tangible and intangible recognition of success from students, colleagues, and from self. Rose had the opportunity during her novice years of teaching reading to witness first hand success breeding success. Her inspiring moments led to successful moments for her students. They fed off of each other and jointly accomplished the difficult tasks as they improved and grew as learners. Such moments were found when she was recognized as the Teacher of the Year for Rose's school. She attributed this award, an inscribed polished pottery bowl, to her students because it was their success that pushed her to be that “whole hearted” teacher to which she aspired.

Rose viewed the iconic recognition received by the state, such as the pins given for success on standardized tests, as a direct validation of the hard work her students did with her guidance. They were the achievers and she channeled this achievement into her pedagogical development,

[This is] all about the kids. . . I have them [pins] at home in a little bag on my dresser. I do not wear them because I do not need them. . . it's the kids. I do not do anything. I just guide them. But I push them and I push them big time and they know it.

This growth through motivation was not only found in the awards given to both her and her students but also between her colleagues. During her novice years of teaching, she and some “pretty close friends on campus” began a prayer book where “every week we meet and we pray for our kids and we pray for the staff” as well as shared inspirational poems or messages with each other. This book became a reference point for Rose when support was needed for all aspects of teaching and living because “if it weren't for prayer” she may not have traversed as well through the tough times.

Rose became aware of the impact that her colleagues had on her novice years as a reading teacher. She identified herself as a visual learner and thus challenged her understanding of teaching reading through observation, “by watching my colleagues interact with their kids. . . I just kind of grab and bring into my classroom and go with it. . .” She observed things that helped to define teaching as well as those that she wished not to incorporate into her teaching identity.

Core Theme 2: Nurtured an empowering environment for success and identity to flourish for self and students through praxis

Taught using life-experiences, literature, and metaphors as an example for having passion in learning and living. The daily aspects of being a novice reading teacher for Rose were accompanied as she wove in life-literacies as well as classroom literacies. Rose showed her students how to have “passion for what you are doing” when she used

pieces of literature that taught life-lessons, morals and character building. Works like *Charlotte's Web* (1952) went beyond the surface level of comprehension building in her classroom and demonstrated the way friends stuck together and gave support in times of need- a concept that sometimes was misplaced when students lacked a home support system. She used pieces like this to reinforce team work, respect, and manners for each other, "That is what I want in my classroom. I want us to work as a team; to be polite to each other; to respect each other because everything that everybody has to say is important."

Additionally, Rose's teaching went beyond the conventional forms of literature based curriculum. She constantly used her own life-experiences as she taught life-literacies. She often used family experiences when she explained moments of having pushed oneself to their fullest potential with such stories of her grandfather and his ambitions in life. She was not limited to just personal literacies but included iconic ones as well. During Art History month, a picture of a ladder was placed on the bulletin board. Like so many other times, this became a spring board as the class discussed having passion for achievement,

I tell the kids you can be on the bottom of the ladder or you can be sitting on the floor never even reaching... but I am here to help you get on that ladder and push you because when you climb to the top of the ladder and get to the top you see a window. . . and what do you see out the window?... and they say, "the sky" and I ask, "Do you see an end to the sky?" and I say there is no limit. So I point to the top of the ladder and it is my job to want to get you there. And they have to want it together. We talk about stuff like that.

Through the use of multiple forms of literacy, Rose helped her students as they developed a classroom identity that let them know who they were and what their purpose was for being there by active reflection on their experiences and how they were used for the advancement of their learning.

Rose's experiences informed her pedagogical understanding. As a young child, she was shy and knew she was a visual learner which was not encouraged at school as a positive learning style,

I remember one day standing in line in the hallway getting ready to go to lunch and my teacher told another teacher that I could not read. I knew enough [English language] to know that what they were saying was not true. I did know how to read just not in English. I remember blushing and feeling sad and angry and embarrassed all at the same time. From that day on I made it a point that no one would ever say I could not read or do anything else for that matter. I concentrated even more on my studies and by the end of the year I was not only speaking fluently in a new language but also reading fluently.

When I think about that experience it makes me sad to know that my teacher thinking I was not listening or understanding what she was saying would say something that would hurt me so much. I did turn it into a positive push by allowing the experience to become an inner challenge to prove to others that I could do what they thought I could not: read.

Reflection on who she was as a learner allowed for tolerance in the classroom for multiple learning styles, "you learn to appreciate all the differences and you learn to accept that everybody in here is going to learn in different ways." Because she sought to

provide a safe learning environment she used this reflection when she designed and altered lessons which allowed for the diverse needs of her students.

For Rose, being a novice teacher meant that she stayed on top of personal development. Rose learned about some of her roles as a teacher through literature about life-lessons and how others overcame adversity which encouraged her “to not give up on kiddos.” Her growth as a reading teacher was not limited to traditional development.

I am always reading a book in Spanish ... it keeps that tongue going. I have parents that are monolingual so I want to be able to sound like I know what I am talking about and say it correctly; plus, my mom... if we say something wrong... she definitely corrects us!

Rose used metaphors as well as prayer in her own growth just as she used them for her students' growth. From such literature, she understood that a novice teacher's role included that “there are things that you cannot change and you just have to accept it.” Metaphors, prayer, literature, and life-stories played a role in her identity formation and allowed her to “look through that window and see different views”.

Provided an empowering environment for student success and identity to flourish.

Having been supported and encouraged during her novice years teaching made it easy for Rose when she reciprocated those same qualities for her students. This meant that she created an environment in which her students felt valued. Teamwork was a concept that Rose strongly believed was necessary for student success. When she provided this support it meant she provided opportunities that empowered students to actively take ownership of their learning. Rose took ownership when she ensured these moments occurred. Rose shared photos of students as they completed a ‘Farm to Market’ unit; a

unit she created with others. “Here we put a little portfolio together” which held the validation of learning for the students which started from when they first planted their third-grade garden to when they harvested and ate their crop. Rose knew that such an environment was for “the kid’s profit.” She kept pictures of her third-grade classes as a reminder that the teamwork, guidance and support were the way she showed that she believed in the students because “kids are my business.” She supported the students and in return they supported her.

By engaging in an active process of praxis, Rose expanded what she understood of her pedagogy. She used the previous year’s accomplishments as she evolved her understanding of teaching and set expectations for both her students and herself. She felt that she had a responsibility to her students as she maintained constant awareness of their needs, “you have to learn to read the students...and know them...I know my students!” This task inspired her to approach her pedagogy as a problem-solver by “finding ways that are going to reach that student.” Through experimenting with her pedagogy, she reflected and made adjustments as she provided the most empowered environment she could. These “aha moments” signified success as a teacher and added to her identity.

Core Theme 3: Professional and personal “voice” has been valued building awareness for ownership of pedagogy and identity

Professional identity was valued through the symbiotic relationship involving respect between self and colleagues. Teamwork was also carried over into the professional side of teaching. Rose felt just as strongly about teamwork with her fellow teachers during her novice years as she did with her students, referring to them as “the best team ever!” This relationship was necessary because of the unique setting of her

school. As a magnet school for fine arts, their time was shared with 90 minutes of fine arts instruction. This encouraged an environment where everyone supported each other and planned collaboratively. With her “close friends on campus” and an administration that believed in its teachers, Rose and the other teachers succeeded. “You know we are privileged to have fine arts every day... but we lose academic time in the classroom, so we collaborate. We integrate.” This school philosophy had an influence on her understanding of teaching as it encouraged multiple learning styles.

As the team leader, she exhibited the same warmth of respect shown in *Charlotte’s Web* (1952) to the other teachers, “We were such an incredible team. We worked so great together that we got the ‘BFF’ team award for the year!” This respect and support was also given back to Rose when they awarded her as the Teacher of the Year. It became a circle of respect, “It is amazing when people you work with give you that recognition ...it is a huge motivator cause I think people believe in me so I have to really be on the ball here!”

Pride for pedagogical development and self-directed growth. Developed pride in teaching and planning stemmed from the balance of self-improvement and a need to help improve her students’ social and academic learning. Prior to and during her novice years teaching, Rose was actively involved in her pedagogical development. One critical incident was when her sister asked her to get her Master’s degree in special education. Rose was not a classroom teacher at that time, but showed support for her sister and used the information as she became a more knowledgeable teacher.

I did it for me! I didn’t do it to be a special education teacher. I did it for me so that I could better grab those kids...And my sister said, ‘We need to do this

together' and I said, 'let's do it!'...so there we are on graduation day with mom and dad [shows photo]!

Professional literature became a staple in her reading collections both paper-bound or with "the convenience of technology... my Kindle! ... I have multiple books in here on education." For Rose, these were not requirements to be checked off as completed, but moments that defined her developing reading teacher identity:

I want the kids to be good readers, but I want the kids to have a passion for what they are doing. And to do that, you have to have a passion for what you are doing. You cannot just go through the motions... man, they will find out like that. They know!

Rose's students saw her passion when she shared her personal growth as a teacher, "I think that I bring in my experiences to the classroom so that they know me, also. I show them that I am doing the same things. I share with them what I am reading right now." Through this, she formed a connection with the students and moved her curriculum outside the walls of the classroom. She guided and nurtured her students towards success, and they guided her as she identified the needs in her professional and pedagogical development.

Rose's experiences helped guide her belief that being a reading teacher was much deeper and had multiple roles. Rose took advantage of opportunities that broadened those roles such as when she was on curriculum planning teams and seized moments that helped her as she gravitated towards that "whole hearted" teacher. Those moments were represented tangibly in the binder that held certificates for workshops and awards collected during her novice years of teaching. Development of the "whole child" was an

additional belief about teaching held by Rose. She believed that by focusing on learning and living expectation, the students developed respect for themselves and for their classmates. Students responded positively to her “strict discipline” and this was seen in their work ethic- a skill she hoped transferred to the real world. When “all those experiences, you know, the observations and the different learning styles and different methods of teaching, and letting them express their own way of learning... when you get that little light bulb going on- that makes me feel like I’m a professional.”

Structural Description

The essence of Rose’s novice teaching years was engulfed by ‘life literacies.’ Life literacy in this sense related to every critical moment as it was connected by some degree of literary narration. She influenced others and was influenced by her own personal narratives or experiences. She grew through and taught with metaphoric representation as well as inspirational poetry. Traditional works of literature, professional pieces of literature as well as personal correspondences were constant components of her development. These were the foundation that created identity for herself and her students. Rose drew from these literary experiences (letters, books, personal narratives, poems and documents) as she formed relationships between her students, family, colleagues and self. It was through these experiences that her professional and personal “voice” became valued. Rose showed passion for teaching reading because her life had been filled with critical incidents that were influenced by multiple forms of literacy. Rose saw teaching not as content myopic, but she formed multiple identities because she saw an array of aesthetic values of literacy in all forms of living, learning and growing. With such a perspective, it became clear as to why teamwork (with family, students and colleagues)

had a significant impact on these years of development. Teamwork allowed for multiple perspectives that converged as one. The essence of being a novice reading teacher for Rose involved the formation of reciprocal relationships. Having been supported, encouraged, and included before and during these years resulted in her creating a classroom and professional environment that supported, encouraged and included those same qualities.

Participating in this phenomenological study allowed her to reflect on the positive influences on her novice teaching years that shaped her understanding of her pedagogy and professional identity. This experience created an opportunity for continuation of that reflective process she made constant in her teaching and brought awareness to the successes she accomplished along the way, “ It was kind of like an Ah-ha moment for myself... an eye opener...when I read what you wrote, how you put it into words, it’s like Wow! ... I know I love what I do, and I still can’t believe that I’m doing what I’m doing!”

Angela

Angela experienced her novice years of teaching reading as an “Embracer of Knowledge”

Following Moustakas outline of Phenomenological analysis of data, I combined the core themes of the three data sources and merged overlapping and repetitive themes. What remained became the basis for constructing Angela’s *Textual Description* of the experience (or “what” the experience was) of being a novice reading teacher, these were (a) Willingness to embrace and reflect on the past as well as future possibilities developed pedagogical awareness and professional identity and (b) Developed an

appreciation for being a reading teacher as she embraced learning opportunities. Supporting details followed each of the two core themes. For Core Theme 1 the supporting themes were: “Positive impact of prior experiences” and “Recognition and commitment led to ownership.” For Core Theme 2 the supporting themes were: “Professional training as a critical incident” and “Reflexivity as a critical incident which led to pedagogical insight.” The *Structural Description*, which presents the possibilities for “how” the experience came to be during her novice years of teaching reading, completes the analysis section for Angela.

Textual Description by themes

Core Theme 1: Willingness to embrace and reflect on the past as well as future possibilities developed pedagogical awareness and professional identity

During the novice years of teaching reading, Angela made meaning of her profession by reflecting on the positive experiences she had when she became a teacher and used the constructive feedback and recognition from colleagues, students and parents as she continued down the path of development.

Positive impact of prior experiences. Angela’s path towards a career as a reading teacher began when she took a step back and looked at her ambitions for her professional career. After several unhappy years as a member in the corporate arena, she dared to think of other possibilities for herself such as becoming a teacher. She learned about teaching through the Alternative Teacher Certification Program and it was a positive experience from the beginning. Things fell into place quickly,

Within the week [submitting required credentials] I had my stuff back. They said, “You can take any of these tests, or take this class,” and I just did! Now, I’m

finishing my fourth year. So this is really the longest I've stayed with a profession even though I've changed schools . . . the profession itself.

The materials that Angela acquired during this program have been meaningful. Not only did they represent a sense of achievement, they also served as a resource and allowed her to reflect back on where she started to where she was now. She kept the certificates, teaching evaluation forms, and textbooks as reminders of her accomplishment, "I was given this book *Getting Ready for the Classroom* with different things like modeling and different things to do. . . so I just kept this because it just kind of reminds me...okay, first year!"

Angela embraced the program and it seemingly embraced back! With no formal student teaching (or classroom experience), her first step into a classroom was her actual first day as a teacher. Angela shared her stories that sprang from written feedback received from the program supervisor and school colleagues,

I had visits from the teachers that I worked [with]...because I had a mentor at my campus, the assistant principal was also assigned to me and then I had "Kay" through the program [the Alternative Teacher Certification Program]. She was the one that would come through and actually do her supervision. It was just neat to see -with her coming in and observing my classroom - that it was actually going okay. That I wasn't [doing a bad job]... But my first year actually wasn't bad. I had a great first year. Even my principal at the time, she would say, "You would never know that you're a first-year teacher because you can manage your classroom very well."

This constructive feedback served as a support system during her first year and allowed her to reflect and validate her teaching practices.

By looking back on prior experiences Angela made connections to her teacher identity during her novice years of teaching reading, “I also think being alternatively certified and having worked in a corporate setting helped me to deal with the kiddos a little bit differently than maybe somebody straight out of college at 22.” With this perspective, she brought her leadership traits into the classroom where it helped her to make pedagogical decisions and to develop her objectives for helping her students succeed beyond her classroom.

Recognition and commitment led to ownership. A driving force throughout Angela’s novice years was her desire for a satisfying career. Her commitment to the teaching profession led her way towards this goal. One value that contributed to her identity was how she kept her students as the focus,

You know, making sure that you’re doing the right thing no matter what, making sure that my students are doing the right thing –I guess when my students are well-behaved, that’s a reflection of me in that sense that I’m a professional, that I can control my classroom and I can teach them at the same time.

During her novice years of teaching reading, Angela looked at teaching with a positive perspective. This enabled her to see the learning process of teaching as rewarding. Where some might have seen teaching in three different school districts over the past five years as a drawback, Angela compared the different educational environments with each other which helped define her profession,

It's been crazy just because I've been to three different districts in the last four years with three different schools. Each school is so different. Really, every school I've been to it's just a learning curve . . . So it's been chaos. I'm surprised that I've stayed in it. I really am, because when I think back from what I know now to what I knew then (or what I didn't know then I guess), I mean I know why teachers leave. I understand why they go elsewhere . . . In theory, I love the kids enough, the idea of teaching enough to keep trying . . . I guess I'm surprised that I enjoy it as much as I do despite...I don't know if hardship is the right word . . . I guess I'm just surprised at how every year, even though they're different struggles, you're still learning and you're still getting better or at least you're trying to . . . There's so much professional development [in education] that just almost makes you . . . if you have the right mindset, become better at what you do.

The drive toward success and the knowledge gained over the years fueled Angela's passion for teaching reading. The journey was exciting and "fun" for her. Despite some of the "quirky" moments with student, parents and other issues, many of these same quirks helped her growth. Her effort for improvement and development of her teacher identity was not unnoticed. Angela shared student mementos and letters from parents. The recognition from students and parents helped her to validate her pedagogy and her effort to make a difference,

When I received this gift, it helped me feel like I am making a difference . . . knowing that you're actually helping a kid. You know, yes, teachers, they help kids, but really do they? So just for her [parent] to be able to notice the changes

and to recognize and be willing to say it to me . . . I get this [gift] and I'm like, "You know what? I am doing okay."

Angela shared another experience about a student who presented a self-made gift. It was special because for this student there lacked finances to purchase a gift. It reminded her that if students could find ways to show their appreciation, she would continue to find ways to help keep them learning and thinking.

Core Theme 2: Developed an appreciation for being a reading teacher through embracement of learning opportunities

Angela embraced multiple opportunities during her novice years which aided in developing her reading pedagogy. Through her experiences, she became aware that pedagogical development was about risks that were taken and new things that were tried. Additionally, she realized that growth into an effective teacher of reading meant participation in the act of reflection (or praxis) which deepened her understanding of her teacher identity.

Professional training as a critical incident. Angela used the positive experience with professional training for measurement of growth as a reading teacher. In her eyes, training was necessary because it provided for her students, improved how she understood her profession, and how she understood student learning expectations. She integrated these understandings into her teacher identity. Angela saw the potential in the search and acquisition of more resources for herself and her students, "You have to embrace it [training]! The example from our writing class, 'The New Jersey Writing Project' is that basically everyone there volunteered to be there." After she applied

knowledge gained from her training, she became more skilled as she saw the impact that strategies had on the students,

One thing I tried . . . after my kids write, they would have to partner up and they would have to read to each other. The other child had to give positive feedback or . . . constructive criticism without being negative. I think they did really well with that instead of having me read it. That's one thing I'm learning in this writing class that I'm taking- Don't read their papers. Let them read it to you because when they read out loud, they hear where they have either left a word out or they've forgotten something or how they're saying it is not how it is on their paper. It just helps them to really think and understand. I just felt that it was neat that they were really doing it and really listening and then they were able to give feedback that was necessary.

Participation in the training session presented by the Flippen Group made an impact on her understanding of the student/teacher relationship and of professionalism. Angela learned many techniques related to how respect and trust were built with her students. The environment of the training was also impactful. The training was held at a 'Bed and Breakfast' venue which provided an opportunity for Angela to build a discourse community. There were break-out sessions that mingled together different teachers from different grades and years of experience. The information presented at the training helped to define Angela's position in the classroom as one that needed to offer respect to receive it from her students as well as how educators learned from one another,

There were one hundred educators or counselors or principals in this big meeting room, but we would break off into small groups so you could actually talk and

discuss. These [shows notebook from training] were just some of the skills that teachers would need to do so that the kids would do the same kind of thing. So I just kept it for reference.

Angela held a unique perspective regarding all forms of professional development. She acknowledged the valuable resources that her colleagues were during her novice years for the realistic day-to-day advice they provided about teaching reading. She held their pedagogical opinions in high regard. Collaborative opportunities helped her growth as a reading teacher:

My partner next door, she's been teaching Language Arts for at least 20 years, and she's even been a reading specialist, so I can bounce ideas off of her. I think that's just the biggest thing -is still being willing and open to new ideas and even criticism.

Reflexivity as a critical incident led to pedagogical insight. Reflection was part of the growth process as a reading teacher for Angela during her novice years. Through reflection she saw how she grew into an effective teacher through both the good and bad experiences of teaching. Sometimes actively and sometimes unconsciously, she reflected on lessons and how the students responded to her teaching and this provided definition to her pedagogical understanding. Angela saw herself as unconventional because she approached teaching as an exploratory and experimental act:

The reflection! Just thinking about what I've done in the past. The whole live-and-learn/ trial-and-error is basically for me. It is how you become a better teacher -You try it, it works, great. You try it, it didn't work, okay, scratch it off. I'll be going into my fifth year this year, so I think it's going to be a little bit

better. I guess just the more experiences and more challenges that I faced in the past that I can work around or work through helps me move on. I experiment, because that's just my life. I think that's just my mentality anyway! . . . I'm unconventional.

Reflecting on and embracing knowledge opened up her ability to identify possibilities in learning moments with her students and herself.

As Angela became aware that pedagogical development involved taking risks and trying new things, she also developed insight about how she understood the education environment. Through the experiences of teaching in different school districts, she developed an appreciation for differentiation. The different schools provided her with a good representation of different student populations, different student learning levels, and different administrative procedures. Angela developed her ability to distinguish the need to “tier up or tier down” (modify) lessons based on her students needs,

I had two GT classes and two regular classes. It was good though because I was teaching...it was really a lesson on differentiating your curriculum...well not curriculum, but your lesson plans because . . . I would take the same lesson that I had planned and I would modify it slightly, but I wouldn't go as low as they probably needed to go.

These lessons became resources for her to reference and reflect on. Angela shared with me her hand-written lesson plans and pointed out those that were successful and those that she learned “what not to do.” For her, these were meaningful as they were representation of her ownership of how she planned and thought about teaching,

specifically that “learning to teach is an everyday thing.” They also gave her a broader understanding of the different policies in different school districts,

The first district I worked in was a small district, so nothing was computerized . . . So our lesson plans were all hand-written out. I do actually miss it. I miss being able to see it and write it out...so I just kept them because it reminds me this was my first year. I look back and I’m like, “What in the world? That’s so not right!” . . . And this is the thing that I miss [pointing to lesson plan book] . . . being able to just add...highlight and mark.

The lessons that Angela shared and her experience as a coach for an academic extra-curricular student team also highlighted her effort as she taught interactively and engaged in self-discovery. Through the act of reflecting on each of these experiences and then action based on that reflection, Angela grew as a novice reading teacher and defined a path for her continued development. Participation in the research projects was an extension of what she did everyday of her novice years but it also made her positive development as a reading teacher more concrete,

I think it’s [research projects] more of a reflection process because it makes you go back and think. Just like showing you the binder through my ACP . . . and the notes from my mentor. [It shows] just where you’ve been, where you are, where you can be. I think that ...it’s definitely a good thing. It definitely helps balance you and kind of grounds you so that you can realize, “I’m not a complete failure. I might not have been good this time, but it’s getting better.” So it’s a good thing!

Structural Description

The essence of Angela's novice years of teaching was about how she embraced the acquisition of knowledge. Accomplishment of this task occasionally meant taking steps in an unknown direction as well as taking risks. This was a part of her personal identity as the unknown did not seem frightening to her but rather challenging and possible. This was evident in her bold move as she changed careers. Although she changed careers as a result of an unhappy career environment, the movement into the field of teaching satisfied her thirst for knowledge. With a new school year came the possibility of new schools, grade levels, administrations, curriculum, and always new students. Angela loved teaching during her novice years possibly because it provided for her challenges and knowledge-gaining opportunities that she sought.

Angela's pursuit for knowledge was seen in the many professional development experiences she embraced. With knowledge as something that only she personally quantified, the certificates, books, correspondence, lessons and student mementos became tangible representations of her passion for creation of a space for herself in education. These tangible pieces of knowledge became concrete through her reflective nature where she compared, validated, justified, and made adjustments to her developing understanding of teaching reading.

Angela's ambition for herself in teaching reading was to become that "poised" teacher who will touch students in memorable ways. This goal may possibly have been sparked by her second grade teacher who left a memorable impression on Angela. It could have been this teacher who helped as she realized her thirst for knowledge. With the memory of the "biggest" classroom library and encouraging moments to read and

write, Angela held her own positive experience with school as something she wanted replicated. As a learner, she experienced reading to gain knowledge and writing to create knowledge from this teacher–now, she taught so she helped her students become leaders of knowledge through the language of reading and writing. Angela’s teaching future holds a leadership role as well. Her participation in professional training encouraged her to publish her experiences as a novice teacher which may help those entering the field of education. Such passion for knowledge and persistence for success truly came from her ability to embrace possibilities.

Jane

Jane experienced her novice years of teaching reading as a “Social Communicator”

Following Moustakas outline of Phenomenological analysis of data, I combined the core themes of the three data sources and merged overlapping and repetitive themes. What remained became the basis for constructing Jane’s *Textual Description* of the experience (or “what” the experience is) of being a novice reading teacher, these were (a) Experiences with and development of “social” literacies built a critical literacy framework for teaching reading and (b) Inquisitive instincts and a reflective/learning disposition shaped a growing reading teacher identity. For Core Theme 1, the supporting themes are: “Social/critical literacies” and “Professionalism, social work experience and communication as literacy.” For Core Theme 2 the supporting themes are: “Reflection and pedagogical understanding” and “Training and mentors.” The *Structural Description*, which presents the possibilities for “how” the experience came to be during her novice years of teaching reading, completes the analysis section for Jane.

Textual Description by themes

Core Theme 1: Experiences with and development of “social” literacies built a critical literacy framework for teaching reading

Jane had a unique opportunity which developed pedagogical and professional awareness when she connected reading instruction with her prior career philosophies as a social worker. During her novice years, she approached reading instruction with a focus on the “whole” student and used forms of literacy that opened channels of communication and created a safe classroom environment. It was through these approaches that Jane began the process which shaped her professional identity and a classroom democracy.

Social/critical literacies. For Jane, the need to help students connect life with learning guided her reading instruction. She saw literature as a way that helped her students cope with daily problems outside the school. When she could, she selected pieces of literature that addressed their social learning needs,

I can remember when we were doing *Because of Winn Dixie* (2000), I have a little boy, ---, in my classroom. He lives with Dad and step-mom . . . When we were reading and we got to that part where . . . she [main character] has a little break down with her dad about why the mom left and he didn’t make her stay . . . Well, this little boy had his mom . . . his mom basically . . . I don’t want to say abandoned him and his brothers, but she couldn’t take care of them . . . She came back down to visit for a week and she makes all these promises. At Christmas he thought she was coming. At spring break he thought she was coming. Well she didn’t show up ‘till the end of April. We’re reading, we’re discussing and he’s

just bawling, he's just bawling! I know what it is. He's thinking of his mom and all that kind of stuff.

Jane developed an understanding of literature through its life impact it had for the students. She displayed pride when she shared lessons that used literary works like *Esperanza Rising* (2000) that connected to both her student population and academic needs. She used language arts objectives such as problem solving to help her students take school knowledge and apply it to life. Questioning and thinking past the surface was crucial for Jane's lessons. These were issues that she saw lacking in individuals even before she became a teacher. By helping her students understand the importance of using these skills and connecting them to real life, she guided her students to becoming more active in changing or managing the social course they traveled.

Jane opened channels that connected social and academic needs, as well as a sense of belonging; Jane spent a great deal of time creating a safe environment,

I think I work really hard from the beginning of the year to develop the environment in the classroom . . . where they're comfortable, and they feel safe and they know that what we say in here stays in here. We have the whole social contract. So kids share so much! Things that I wouldn't even probably share to one person let alone for a whole class. It's like, 'This reminds me of my mom, and my mom left.' Every year I have at least two or three foster kids throughout the year, and they go through these abandonment issues... They're [students] very caring and understanding and nurturing towards each other. I think that a lot of it comes through from the novels that we read or the stories that we read because we

try to make that human-real-life connection. That's why I picked *Esperanza Rising* (2000).

Jane experienced the freedom to develop a safe environment for her classroom, but when she incorporated her social literacy ideas, many times they contradicted her district's set curriculum. She experienced discomfort in the format, limitations, and procedures of the State-adopted curriculum, CSCOPE [“CSCOPE is a comprehensive, customizable, user-friendly curriculum management system built on the most current research-based practices in the field. Its primary focus is to impact instructional practices in the classroom to improve student performance. At the heart of the CSCOPE process is a guaranteed and viable curriculum,” (TESCCC, 2011, p.3)]. Although she had such strong ideals for reading instruction, she also felt that she lacked the opportunities to fully develop her reading teacher identity, “Sometimes I feel like my freedom to do these things is not there. I'm kind of restrained because of the... CSCOPE. I hate to knock CSCOPE, I just don't like the format and it doesn't work for me. It's just not my style. It's just so rigid.” The implantation of this curriculum forced her grade level to divide subjects for planning lessons. Jane no longer had control of literature selection. As a result, Jane believed she struggled throughout most of her novice years to connect pedagogy with identity. Many things inhibited her from branching off on her own during this time. In addition to the restrictions imposed by the curriculum, the first two years teaching in a Special Education inclusion class, Jane felt more like a teacher's assistant than a teacher. Even at the end of her novice years, she believed that her lack of individuality impaired her passion for teaching reading and her ability to form an identity for it.

While this curriculum may have been restricting, it allowed her to improve her pedagogical awareness of reading instruction as well as made an additional connection to understanding her students. Jane saw where this curriculum lacked, especially in the area of student learning styles. Individuality in her classroom was very important to her and she empathized with her students who had no choice in what they read as she had little choice in what she used. Having her hands tied, Jane relied heavily in her novice years on her personal philosophies which supported her students' learning needs and her need to make a space for herself.

Professionalism, social work experience, and communication as literacy. Prior to becoming a teacher, Jane spent 12 years as a case manager and social worker where she encountered many situations with disadvantaged populations. At the end of her novice years, she viewed these experiences as valuable traits that made her unique as a teacher. They provided insight which aided understanding of a large majority of her student population. She felt "privileged of having a career before teaching that has made me a more thoughtful and patient teacher." From these prior experiences, she developed the ability to communicate in a "manner that is respectful and empathetic." Jane also saw the importance of communication and how vital it was to involve parents in their children's learning. "My work history has definitely helped me and shaped my identity and reputation as a teacher."

Communication in all its forms became part of Jane's identity as a teacher. Her social work experiences, combined with communication, defined her classroom philosophies for social equality. Jane experienced ownership of her classroom

democracies because of the openness with which she communicated her beliefs that extended past her classroom walls,

I think it's part of my social worker coming in, that comes in all the time for me, but I feel like my job isn't just to teach the academics. I always feel like I've got a responsibility to teach the kids to grow up to be mature, responsible kids that are held accountable for their actions and they grow up to be good, decent people.

She often saw her nurturing and guiding quality from social working blend into her teacher identity. With each new school year, she unofficially performed a "needs assessment" on her students so that she knew "what the dynamics at home" would do to the dynamics at school. She approached her students like she approached a field case (i.e., took notes and then analyzed the information) which made her classroom an authentic environment. She invested time in them so they would invest time to respect her desires for their learning. Jane helped the "whole" student which addressed the personal problems along with their academic needs.

Jane felt that communication with her students about her goals and beliefs about teaching was important. She posted her Mission statement on the wall leading out of her classroom. This had been a project for the Master's graduate program and she used it as a daily reminder of her goal to serve the students and help them be more than just good students, "What's important? Yeah, reading and writing... the math, but also they need to know how to treat each other, how to be respectful." The underlying message of her mission conveyed her personality, "I think that is one of my stronger points [communication] because I feel treating the kids and the parents with respect seems to produce a lot better response." She used different forms of communication well and

purposely wove that strength throughout her novice years of teaching reading. Students connected more personally and more openly with literature because she modeled such openness. She set social expectations high, showed respect, and expected respect in return, so her students saw the value in feedback and discussion, “I think because I’m a talker --that kind of fosters more freedom, more discussion—I think that I show a lot of myself with my kids.”

An additional aspect of the social/critical literacy that Jane incorporated into her classroom was the use of specific written communication with her parents and students. She became known for her “Monday Notes.” Filled with pride and ownership for this association, she felt that the personal and authentic communication opened lines of respect with her parents and was a contributing factor to the social change she witnessed among the students during the year. She stayed proactive with her students’ learning through the “Monday Notes,” “Yes, it takes me an hour to an hour and a half every week to do it, but it also saves me the headaches of parents calling all irate at me... [because they were not aware of a problem].” Jane maintained the authenticity of the “Monday Notes,” when she organized and gathered information about the students’ progress and reported back to their parents. She associated this trait with the development of a professional identity. Organization resonated that she did not just teach these children, but studied them and really knew their strengths and weaknesses. Having this information on hand was a quality that spoke of her passion for the development of the “whole” student. A critical moment of validation for these efforts came one summer when a parent sent an email to her and her principal acknowledged her efforts and successful results of her consistent communication and concern for the child in and outside of the classroom.

The open lines of communication between parents also affected the students. Being so organized with their day-to-day events let the students know that she watched and learned from them. Jane gave the students opportunities for communication of their personal, social and academic concerns or comments, “This is my mailbox. I’ve had it forever. It is super old. I keep it on top and kind of close to my desk and whenever my kids want to communicate with me –something privately, they just stick a little note in there.” An example of this open communication came from a student who struggled with successful learning for many years and had a difficult home life. Jane’s social working skills surfaced while she worked with the student in and out of school and focused on both social and academic needs. During one of their communication exchanges, Jane suggested that if the student improved and passed her State tests, the student did not need to attend summer school, an event that she had participated in for the past four summers. The student did pass and the letter she wrote to Jane spoke of the appreciation she had for her. This letter became a special token. Again, Jane addressed the “whole” student which made a difference. Jane shared additional letters from students and parents who recognized her late afternoons she gave up for tutorials and recognized her extra efforts to help students succeed academically and socially.

Jane held onto her classroom beliefs although she struggled with her pedagogical identity. The students validated her efforts to construct a safe environment which allowed them to communicate through writing, reading, listening, speaking, and thinking about the social impact “school” had on their lives and vice versa. Positive feedback and response from students validated that the way she included the social aspect of learning in her classroom was exactly what her students needed as well as the teacher she wanted to

become. These experiences also proved that communication, for her, was a powerful tool she had as a novice teacher of reading.

Core Theme 2: Inquisitive instincts and a reflective/learning disposition shaped a growing reading teacher identity. From the beginning, Jane brought into teaching her personal identity as an “open communicator.” This trait strengthened her professional identity and bridged who Jane was personally with who Jane was as a teacher. Additionally, her active participation in reflection and a need to study her profession built a foundation which strengthened her understanding of reading pedagogy and her professional responsibilities. Routine and intentional reflection allowed Jane to view the benefits of critical incidents such as teacher training and relationships with mentors (specifically in her third year) and how they helped construct a growing understanding of being a novice reading teacher.

Reflection and pedagogical understanding. The only connection that Jane made between herself and a reading teacher identity was that she viewed herself during the novice years as an “ongoing-not-there-yet-learner” of the profession. As a learner, it was difficult for her to really feel like she had mastered or was on the way to owning her reading pedagogy. Insecurities and the way she strove for improvement sometimes became intermingled. She had a desire and passion for professional literature on reading approaches and always had an “eye out” for techniques, strategies and ideas, “I always feel like there’s more to learn and I can do better.” Not only was she an “open communicator,” but she was an “open” observer as well,

It might be something that I pick up from another teacher. . . I just always trying to absorb what other people are doing and if I see somebody else being

successful, I say, ‘Well, how’d you do that?’ So part of [learning about my style] is sometimes just flying by the seat of my pants, and other times it’s just asking for help.

A big part of observation came from Jane’s reflective abilities. She became aware through reflection that there were gaps and needs in her reading instruction. Reflection did not come naturally but it was a huge part of both the Alternative Teacher Certification and the Master’s programs and so she associated the act of reflecting as part of her responsibilities as a teacher. Through this practice, Jane defined many traits about herself as a reading teacher. She became aware of her bias towards nonfiction and the balance that must be kept between genres in her classroom. Personally, she navigated toward nonfiction/self-knowledge type literature which filled her need for more knowledge. Jane felt that she under-utilized being a self-contained teacher during these years, “I’m trying to learn how to be more cross-curricular. . . I don’t feel I’ve done a very good job of teaching reading through my science or my social studies . . . which is sad because I do have a self-contained classroom.” She became conscience of a need to embrace teaching styles that practiced student-directed learning rather than teacher-directed routines. This she valued highly as she worried about falling into habits of how she was taught because of the rigid curriculum.

Observing and reflecting both derived from her need for more knowledge. She embraced projects in her training programs which helped her better understand the relationship between students’ lives outside the classroom and their success in her classroom. Many of her students’ parents had little schooling, little English speaking ability, or were migrant/transit workers. She wanted to find ways to best serve this

population. She often researched informally and formally and found that it was a natural task. A more formal research experience came from a project for the Master's program,

Sometimes kids surprise me 'cause when I was doing my own . . . collaborative action research thing — and I was doing it on parental involvement in rural schools and I was so surprised that . . . kids want the teacher to go home, you know, to visit with “my” parents, see where “I” live — you know, look at “my” room —I worked in the home environment [before]. I'm not, you know — dogs, dirty homes or whatever — nothing fazes me, I've seen it all.

Training and mentors. Positive experiences with the Alternative Teacher Certification program, the Master's program, and professional development training and guidance from mentors all helped her as she created an image and set expectations for being a “reading teacher.” Jane routinely relied on course material from her training programs and through them she enhanced the district curriculum and her understanding of reading pedagogy. These experiences allowed her to explore knowledge about student learning styles and higher level thinking skills which provided multiple approaches to address her students' social and academic needs. She began “thinking about wanting to get the kids to be self-motivated and just to want to be self-directed learners, and also for me--to always continue to want to grow and to continue to learn.” During her third year, Jane experienced a training conference presented by Marie Carbo which left an impression with her,

The main thing I came away with was the importance of learning styles—not all students learn in the same manner, and I got ideas on how to assess this from the beginning of the school year (reading about “Rose and Tulip”) and how to make

my classroom an inviting type of room where the environment is welcoming to all types of learners. . . Marie Carbo is not our school curriculum, but I do utilize it as a center or when I teach summer school for strugglers. . . The philosophy behind Carbo is that students move along at their own pace.

Although being a strong communicator, reflector, and observer were traits brought with her from her previous career, Jane validated the use of these traits as a teacher from two unofficial mentors during her novice years. Her first mentor was the special education teacher she worked with her first two years. She was a veteran teacher of more than 15 years. The other was influential the last four years who was a fellow teacher in fourth grade and had begun a doctoral degree in reading instruction. Each of these mentors had a philosophy “all about the kids... Whatever it takes.” They worked late hours and went out of their way to help students be successful which confirmed Jane’s work ethic beliefs. This work ethic became a trademark for Jane and she was proudly recognized by her colleagues for her efforts that went over and beyond her responsibilities to help her students.

As a co-researcher of this research project, she took the opportunity to reflect on the image of the teacher she wanted to become, to refocus that image and continue moving toward that goal. Through artifacts she collected, journal entries she wrote and through conversations we had, Jane thought all these activities were positive and consistent with her personal view of growth in the profession.

Structural Description

The essence of being a novice reading teacher for Jane rested in the passion through which she reached out to her students and helped them as they made both social

and academic changes through social literacies. As a Social Communicator, this disposition laid the foundation which made such opportunities possible. Her prior work experience as a social worker was a powerful component in the formation of this identity. It explained the need she expressed when she nurtured and guided her students towards self-reliance and why she reinforced this connection with the use of life-stories through literature. Her prior experiences were filled with life-stories of real people who made real decisions and how they stayed on a track towards the improvement of their circumstances with her help. To help her clients succeed, she researched and reflected on the details of their lives to give proper guidance. She developed verbal and written communication which both documented and validated her attempts. These developed instincts explained why she associated and validated these traits to her professional identity. Additionally, Jane's prior work experiences supported her conflict with the district's curriculum, but not a complete rebellion of it. Social work is governmental in nature. Many guidelines and work ethics required diligence, and one learned either to work through those guidelines or around them but rarely against them. That is exactly how Jane seemed in her approach to the district curriculum.

The crux of Jane's identity can be found by looking further back into her childhood experiences and it explained how possibly her experiences teaching reading during the novice years unfolded. School experiences, both positive and negative helped her to confirm and enhanced Jane's beliefs as a teacher. A high school English teacher taught her about how personal and consistent communication with students produced impactful life and academic results. A negative experience in grade school with a teacher left a traumatic mark on her beliefs about classrooms and teachers. This cold, distant, and

uncaring individual defined for Jane what individuals/teachers should not become. In opposition, it taught her the importance of providing kind and useful information that would make a difference rather than shut down progress. These experiences helped frame her beliefs about being a reading teacher. Finally, through many summers spent as she grew up with her grandparents, she became aware of the need in one's life for respect, encouragement, conversation, structure and creativity –all qualities that drove her mission in teaching.

Jane struggled during her novice years of teaching reading with developing a “reading” teacher identity. This may not necessarily be derived from her feeling that she was still learning about teaching but more because she may have looked too conservatively at the idea of what a reading identity should look like. The essence of being a novice reading teacher was heard throughout all the stories shared, throughout all the time spent in conversation, it was clear she struggled with this identity because she was far more than just a reading teacher – she was a ‘social literacy’ teacher who used reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking as she made differences in her students lives.

Marie

Marie experienced her novice years of teaching reading as a “Mindful Navigator”

Following Moustakas outline of Phenomenological analysis of data, I combined the core themes of the three data sources and merged overlapping and repetitive themes. What remained became the basis for constructing Maria's *Textual Description* of the experience (or “what” the experience was) of being a novice reading teacher, these were

(a) The professional environment broadened her understanding of content knowledge and

built confidence for exploration and experimentation with reading pedagogy and (b) Positive experiences with students and reflection extended understanding of a reading teacher identity. For Core Theme 1 the supporting themes were: “Growth through guidance”, “Ownership through growth” and “Passion and autonomy through ownership.” For Core Theme 2 the supporting themes were: “Students as a support system” and “Reflection as a support system.” The *Structural Description*, which presents the possibilities for “how” the experience came to be during her novice years of teaching reading, completes the analysis section for Alice.

Textual Description by themes

Core Theme 1: The professional environment broadened her understanding of content knowledge and built confidence for exploration and experimentation with reading pedagogy

Marie’s experiences with the professional environment developed her pedagogical philosophy through the guidance of professional resources, trainings, and self-guided learning activities. She pursued opportunities that improved her effectiveness as a reading teacher and embraced moments in which she shared the art and structure of teaching reading. Through all these experiences, Marie explored and experimented with reading methods which led to confidence and ultimately autonomy.

Growth through guidance. As a first-year teacher, Marie felt all the usual concerns that one went through entering a new profession. Associated with the “survival mode” were feelings of confusion, insecurity and intimidation. What was not so usual was that Marie also experienced guidance, growth, and success through the structured support her district’s reading curriculum provided. “Success for All” was a national

reading program that laid the foundation for understanding reading instruction for Marie. The program provided her with binders full of structured, detailed literature-based lessons that focused on student-led discussions and direct implementation of reading skills. Marie also went through intensive training and these training sessions advanced her working understanding of the content knowledge needed for teaching reading,

This was excellent for me when I was a first-year reading teacher because everything was here, but now that I feel a little more seasoned, I can deviate it and go a little deeper. . . This was training [displays training material] and this was probably one of the best professional development trainings I've gone to in my five years. . . I remember I would have this [teaching manual] clutched to me like it was my security blanket. I could not let go of it.

This reading program taught Marie the power of appropriate scaffolding. As a new teacher, she feared judgment from others who might have assumed from her inquiry or questioning that she was not knowledgeable enough to teach reading. The program included an on-site advisor who guided her in a private, non-threatening manner over the course of many years. Every six weeks, Marie and the advisor met to discuss the program. When the time was right, she helped her to extend on the program and challenged her teaching insecurities. Through this, Marie became confident and knowledgeable about the skills and components for teaching,

She came in and gave lots of wonderful constructive criticism and advice. . . I think that is what, as a first-year teacher, I needed more than anything. "Cause junior high was scary!" Those upper-elementary grades . . . sometimes they know more than you do! But, she kept telling me, "It's okay. Follow this exactly." She

kept telling me, “You can do this word for word until you get comfortable”. She didn’t push me when I wasn’t ready, and I think some new teachers get pushed a little bit when they’re not really ready. You’ve got to get some experience under your belt before you can really go it alone with a lesson. . . Then, I think with her prodding and with going to the professional development and with her coming every six weeks [I gained understanding and confidence].

The program provided Marie with many positive experiences for teaching reading, as well as an opportunity to develop a professional identity. She attended the National conference for “Success for All” in Baltimore, Maryland, which exposed her to other individuals with whom she identified. They exchanged concerns, beliefs, and techniques which opened Marie’s eyes to a global idea of teaching reading. Here, she found a discourse community and knowledgably collaborated with teachers from all across the nation who had different levels of experience. At the conference, Marie was not a novice teacher but an equal. Through the collaboration, Marie became aware of her ability to differentiate and compare state reading standards with other states. This was professional development through which she truly felt like an active-learning “professional” rather than a passive, timid listener.

The experience of participating in both the reading program and conference set the bar high for professional training. With the success and professionalism Marie experienced, she embarked on a quest for more knowledge and training which treated her like a professional. She developed a critical eye for trainings that supplied collaboration with other reading professionals and the depth of understanding for teaching reading rather than just a surface exposure,

Because some workshops that I have gone to –it’s like they’re saying the same thing and you don’t get as much out of them. I want the meat and potatoes! I want good substance to take back into my classroom! Sometimes I feel like workshops are not the professional development that we need, that it’s just a day to get hours. She became mindful of professional literature presented at workshops and created a list of resources books and websites that she wanted to explore for information that matched her teaching philosophies. Although, many of these resources spoke to the general theories of teaching reading, after several years she felt confident to “tweak it to match and fit the TEKS [Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills- curriculum standards].” Ownership of her developing pedagogy became evident to her by her third year. She realized that the scripted, structured format led to her independence but was no longer necessary,

I liked how it was all planned out, and that first year or two I didn’t deviate from this at all. Then I got kind of an ‘ah ha’ moment starting at my third year, and I was like, ‘I don’t have to do it exactly that way.’ Then I did a few things differently and it worked, so I think that gave me some confidence to say, “Oh, I’m a good enough reading teacher that I can do this” . . . So I’m like, “Why am I worrying so much about this?” When I stopped worrying about that, I think it kind of freed me just to really be myself and teach more instead of worrying about all the little technical aspects of the classroom. . .

Ownership through growth. Through the structured approach to teaching reading, Marie developed a foundation for reading instruction and the confidence to know when and what to teach. This led to her ability to provide exploration and depth in her lessons.

Marie found herself searching for resources that would take her students deeper into the literature. When she tried something new, she would fall back on her need for high scaffolding. These were usually very specific and structured resource books that gave detailed descriptions of how to implement the activity or lesson. They might have been on presenting research projects, book reports, or more active interaction with the literature. Resource materials were sometimes handed down from more experienced teachers, or she searched for those that workshops leaned towards.

Marie believed that poetry was a new focus on the state level. She came to this conclusion because of the increased presentations at workshops that she attended on this topic. As a result, poetry became a new focus for her pedagogical development. It was a concern for Marie because she felt she lacked a good understanding of poetry. She reached out to children's literature that brought the content down a level so that she could concentrate on skill development, specifically when teaching poetry. The younger poetry books allowed her to deconstruct the structure and put it back together, "breaking it down from a children's perspective made it easier for me to understand, and I think it made it easier for me to teach." This very special book, *Poetry Speaks to Children* (2005) was a gift from her mother, a veteran teacher of English and the most impactful mentor during her novice years. With the help of this book, she embraced poetry with a critical eye rather than a fearful one. Marie took risks and tried many different approaches that helped her and the students understand the many different aspects of reading instruction. She saw that the new CSCOPE curriculum guide was weak in the English Language Arts areas and supplemented with her resources. Through this type of growth, she saw herself having the confidence to reach out to other colleagues and share teaching ideas.

The ownership, camaraderie, and pride strengthened Marie's professional identity. Her district encouraged cross-grade level and cross-curriculum development. Following this lead, she shared her books that she felt added to any type of teaching, including the content teachers,

So I've been able to share this book with some of my colleagues and say, "Here's how you can do a writing workshop with your literature text...and really make it [deeper and fun]...or do a theme unit. Do book boxes..." I have used a lot of this, so I'm really glad I kept it!

Owning her pedagogy and mastering the fundamentals of reading instruction fostered professionalism. Marie felt professional when she recommended student literature and knew the skills that were best brought out with the literature; when she tiered up or tiered down lessons that met her students' needs; when she saw the state curriculum standards more holistically rather than in isolation; and, when she collected and organized student performance and shared with other colleagues and administration. All these elements of Marie's reading teacher identity led her to have the ability to know when to use her knowledge, how to use it, and what to do with what she learned about her students through reading measurements. These were her teaching responsibilities that represented professionalism,

I think keeping really good portfolios and really good running records of your students' performance. . . I think sometimes that's a better measure of how successful you've been as a teacher and how much your students have mastered other than the one snapshot day on the TAKS test, because I can make little notes in their individual portfolios that said "they accomplished this. . . This is what

they did. . . This is how many words per minute they read.” Maybe I was doing a fluency check and they didn’t even know it because they were so into the book. Or maybe I can ask them, “What was that story mainly about? Or, tell me one of the details about it,” and they don’t even really realize that I’m really kind of checking them. Then when it comes down to where my administrators say, “Show me the data” . . . that’s my data! And I think that makes me feel professional that I’ve collected the data. But I’ve kind of done it in a more creative way, one that works for me. Like math and science is real easy [to assess]. For reading, it’s not necessarily as easy. It’s more objective and it’s more subjective, so I think you have to get creative in how you assess their mastery of certain reading skills. . . I think having that knowledge to be able to speak with a coworker and a professional makes me feel “professional”. I think that makes me feel more professional than going to a workshop.

The confidence and professionalism Marie exhibited established respect and autonomy with the administration. She was consulted with about reading programs and other curricular needs allowing her to embrace her passion for teaching reading.

Passion and depth through ownership. Marie felt that an additional (and probably most important) responsibility she had as a teacher included making literature come alive and to allow for opportunity to develop passion for reading. She was excited about literature she explored and modeled that excitement for her students. It was important that her lessons engaged her students and provoked thought so students were interested and willingly took the journey of reading with her. She helped her students as they looked deeper at literature, she experimented with project-based learning and regularly referred

to her Bloom's Taxonomy Flip chart. Preparing project-based learning required Marie to create rubrics that scaffold learning. Many ideas came from a resource book that a friend handed down to her called *Creative Book Reports: Fun projects with rubrics for fiction and nonfiction* (2004). The activities from this book helped her students express ownership, voice, and creativity over their understanding of literature. This book "made teaching reading, for me, very fun because the kids get excited doing these projects. They're not just sitting there doing worksheets." She also credited the help of her theater background for showing the passion for reading out loud. Through read-alouds, she was able to translate the character's identity through voice alteration. These and other positive experiences during her novice years helped her extend her understanding of a reading teacher identity.

Core Theme 2: Positive experiences with students and reflection extended understanding of a reading teacher identity

Positive student responsiveness defined and validated Marie's teaching approach. Her experiences during the novice years with her students' success and participation in reflective thought enabled Marie as she made personal and professional connections to her developing identity.

Students as a support system. The student feedback and responsiveness toward her teaching style validated Marie's pedagogical philosophy. Students were engaged in poetry writing and they became fluent in its lingo, "My kids loved writing! We wrote haikus; we wrote diamantes; we wrote narrative poetry, and they really got into it a lot more than I thought they would and I'm like, 'Okay, ah ha! Maybe I actually taught it well because they're enjoying it!'" She used their responses to gauge her pedagogical

choices such as assigning project-based learning. The students recognized the diversity in skills and subjects that the projects required such as the use of math or content class information necessary for completion of the assignment. Despite low-socioeconomic populations, the students found ways to complete these projects and were proud of their work. Marie started these projects as “in-class” assignments, but the students commented that if they took them home, they incorporated more detail into their work. The students helped Marie identify types of projects that provided value and meaning for learning. This also was noticed outside the classroom walls as the positive response by the students was soon recognized by her administrators. They commented on the students’ engagement often and associated the success in the classroom with positive State test scores,

I feel so much more confident and so much more relaxed about to start my fifth year! It’s just amazing! It’s just amazing! I think, too, hearing people say, “Oh, your test scores were wonderful! Your parents don’t mind getting these materials together for these book reports because the kids are loving them!”

One particular experience with a student during her first year teaching bridged Marie’s personal identity with her professional one. This student suffered from multiple learning disabilities as well as had little home support. Marie immediately recognized potential in him that very few others had. During that year, she provided intervention which raised both reading and writing levels. As if that in and of itself was not enough validation that extra effort put forth for your students was just part of the job, two years later, this student returned to her because he wanted to apply for the Upward Bound program and needed her help. With her assistance and the student’s hard work, he was

accepted into the Upward Bound program. Additionally, Marie went to her district's mentor program coordinator and requested that she be his mentor. While a mentor, she included him in her own family excursions and exposed him to activities at the local university. Marie became extremely attached and was truly touched by the hand-written letter from the student's father which expressed his gratitude for her help and guidance. The father suffered from a terminal illness and it was special for him that he knew that his son had a chance at college because of her help.

Reflection as a support system. Throughout these novice years, Marie understood reading pedagogy, teacher identity, and her passion for literature through personal and professional reflection. She actively sought out opportunities to learn based on reflecting on the needs her teaching dictated. During and after lessons, as well as at the end of the year, she asked herself questions about its effectiveness and whether the students were engaged enough,

I've been making notes at the end of the year: this worked, this didn't. . . I can see lots of areas where I want to spend over the summer tweaking...different reading things. I'm like, "This didn't work." Not to toot my own horn, but my TAKS scores were good, so I feel like there were some things that I did that are worthwhile, that were important, that I need to remember, that I need to keep doing it that way.

Marie became aware of her growth when she identified through reflection how previous insecurities held her back and prevented deeper approaches; and how years later her confidence empowered her as she returned to those past challenges. Additionally, through reflection Marie noticed that her appreciation for literature grew,

I like to read now, and I never thought I would ever say that. As a fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grader, it was a battle at home to get me to read. It was scream and cry, kick and throw fits just to get me to read the required reading I was supposed to do, much less anything that I wanted to read. But now I love to read.

As she revisited the student novels from year to year, she opened her eyes to the uniqueness that each piece held for learning. Marie noticed aspects of the literature that she had not uncovered in the previous years. She became surprised at how much she truly loved teaching sixth grade. At first, she was frightened because she struggled as a younger reader herself, but she shared that experience with her students and used it as a motivational tool,

I never saw myself teaching these grades . . . because I wasn't a good reading student when I was little . . . I struggled so much, but I've seen how far I've come as an individual and as a person, and that has kind of shaped me as a teacher. I really believe that and I think it's kind of what's brought my passion.

Marie developed an image of her reading classroom that was opposite of her personal childhood reading experiences in hopes that strength developed rather than frustration for reading. Rather than just teaching "required reading," she hoped to display an appreciation for literature and help her students observe how each piece offers insight into the world of fiction while making connections to their real world. She attributed her passion for teaching reading during the novice years to the value her family, students, and colleagues placed on her efforts to achieve her goal.

As a co-researcher of this research project, she felt pride in participating in the study. She spoke confidently with administration about the accomplishments she

discussed through the projects. Marie spoke of the reflective nature of the projects and how they helped highlight her progress in becoming a reading teacher, “The timing has been good because having a few years under my belt and then getting to go back and reflect has made me aware of how far I’ve come [and it has] kind of given me some goals for the future.”

Structural Description

The essence of being a novice reading teacher for Marie can be described as being a “Mindful Navigator” –mindful because of how critical she viewed her pedagogical and professional development, her goals for her students to develop an appreciation for reading and to include her personal experiences *with* reading to influence her teaching *of* reading. As a passenger on this journey of learning to teach reading, she used the structured guidance as a map during her early novice years to navigate down the path of owning her reading pedagogy. In return, she became a navigator as she supplied direction and guidance for both well-performing and struggling students.

Being mindful was a very internal element for Marie. It is possible that because she was mindful about her insecurities and her feeling of unpreparedness during the first year, this caused her acceleration of her awareness as she learned and gathered as much information about the teaching of reading. Being mindful of the fear of inadequacy affected every aspect of her teaching from how she found her own method of lesson planning to experimenting with teaching methods to find the best fit for herself and her students. Marie’s mindfulness of her early challenges as a young reader influenced her experiences as a novice reading teacher,

I remember we were split up: red birds, blue birds, yellow birds. So even at a young age, kids know what group...they know what color that is. They know if it's high, middle, or low, even though you're not saying high, middle, and low, they know. I was always labeled the lower because I was slow. My reading comprehension was good, but I read very slowly and it took me longer.

Sometimes I had to read it twice before I could really do the little six comprehension questions . . . I don't want the kids to feel the way I felt. Once you get to that frustration level, then you're going to have the "I can't" and the "I won't." The kids shut down on you, and I don't want to see kids shut down. I guess that's why [she puts passion into choosing books and activities], because I struggled so much.

Her ability for connection with her past difficulties allowed her more focused entry into her teacher career. Marie had well defined images of what teaching of reading should look like and what it should not look like. Her difficulties allowed her to be aware of the diversity of student needs as she could relate both with those who struggled as well as with those who succeeded. Being mindful led her to being a navigator, specifically when she saw students who had similar difficulties with reading and with literature appreciation as she had herself. The need to reach outside the typical duties of teaching was powerful when it came to helping struggling students. Early on, this awareness and effort defined an identity for Marie that she was making a difference in the lives of her students. Being a "Mindful Navigator" gave direction to build the confidence she needed to succeed as a reading teacher and it will continue to take her on a journey that helps her use reading as a way for students to be mindful of their confidence.

Discussion

This section of the chapter brings together the experiences of all five participants during their novice years of teaching reading. I compiled all five individual *Textual* and *Structural Descriptions* and merged them into one data source to uncover the overall essence of being a novice reading teacher. This became the *Composite Description*. More specifically, I took the overall outlines of core themes, supporting themes and the invariant constituents and assigned the same color code for each of these sections for each participant. Separating the colored section for each participant into slips, I then grouped similar themes together for the whole group which visually enabled me to associate how each participant experienced their novice years of teaching reading in relation to each of the other co-participants (based on the colors). This arrangement resulted in nineteen sub-themes. A final shuffle formed six core themes. The most commonly shared-experiences from these six core themes (visually represented by the color assigned to each participant) were that novice reading teachers: (a) experienced using prior lived-experiences to impact reading pedagogy; (b) experienced concern for students' social, cultural and academic well-being; (c) experienced active reflection; (d) experienced making pedagogical and professional connections through specific reading support systems which developed their philosophy for reading; (e) experienced awareness of growth as a result of these systems; and (f) experienced recognition of strengths attributing to their professional and pedagogical identity. With these core themes, I studied the narrative *Textual and Structural Descriptions*, referred to my notes and Moustakas's (1994) guideline for composing the composite description (pp. 121, 137-143).

Many in the field of qualitative research have chosen a narrative re-presentation as a way of framing life-stories of teachers (Bullough, 1990; Clandinin & Connelly, 1986; Diamond, 1993; Kelchtermans, 1993; Rippon & Martin, 2006). Narrative re-presenting allows for cycles and patterns of the experience to ebb and flow as they do in real life. Metaphoric representation takes the essence of life-stories and allows the reader to make their own connections (or transfer) through their own experiences with the understanding of the metaphor. Phenomenological research seeks to better define the knowledge gained from life experiences by interpreting the essence and giving it a voice through a natural narration of the experience. Individuals synthesize a phenomenon by connecting it to their past experiences and opinions to validate or contradict its meaning (Husserl, 1973). Metaphors help the transfer by forming concrete understandings for the experience (Munby, 1986). A narrative re-presentation was selected as the most appropriate mode of presenting data derived from human life stories. Through a narrative approach of presenting the data, the unique plot characteristics of my participants' experiences were retold as they unfolded from the beginning, the middle, and finally at the end of their novice years teaching reading (Polkinghorne, 1995). Following the *Composite Description* is the *Essence* for being a novice reading teaching for the five participants. The *Essence* synthesizes the experiences and provides the reader with a clear perspective of what and how these individuals experienced being a novice reading teacher (Creswell, 2007, p. 62; Moustakas, 1994, pp. 100, 144-145).

Composite Description

The beginning years for a novice reading teacher were like those of an immigrant entering a new country (Sabor, 2004). For several of my participants, it was a foreign

land with its own culture, traditions, language, and policies. During these years, newcomers, with a language translator brought with them from their homeland in hand (i.e., resources materials from university or alterative teacher certification programs), attempted to assimilate in hopes of being welcomed into the new society.

There was a great deal of turmoil during these first years as a novice reading teacher. For a few participants, prior teaching beliefs were challenged, restricted, or contradicted. Feelings of confusion, loneliness, inadequacy and despair aimed to derail their travels and harbored a “home sick” feeling. It seemed impossible that a settling-in would ever happen and either conceding to the already established structure or withdrawing from the “new land” entirely seemed to be the only options for survival.

For the other participants, the unknown was curious and exciting. These individuals were ready for the challenge. They accepted that the newness was not to be feared, but rather found it to be addictive and intoxicating. For participants who found themselves on this journey, being an active learner of the reading profession bridged their immersion into the new culture. The process of acceptance meant being mindful, alert, and aware of their own learning styles and their own pedagogical needs. Still, whether they were embracing or confronting the new elements, all participants took advantage of opportunities provided to them both through the school environment and through their personal endeavors to better understand their pedagogical and professional duties. By being active in searching for critical components that would build their pedagogical and professional identity, they created a space for them to reside.

Then, in that pedagogical nanosecond (Kincheloe, 2005), every participant found a door to this new civilization opening for them, inviting and allowing their individuality

to intermingle with the culture. Many individuals found this door opening faster because their concerns for the populations –the students –were more powerful than their individual desires to feel included. These participants developed “citizenship” or ownership of their classrooms out of the need to guide, nurture, and provide for the well being of the “whole” student, both socially and academically. There was no time to waste when a student’s success or failure pivoted on their actions. There were many mixed feelings among these individuals. Some felt guilty for not doing enough to learn the profession and help their students. Some felt fear of being associated with an image of being a “bad” teacher of reading. Many individuals mixed these fears with pride in seeing the occasional moment of success when they reached their students through their instruction. Ironically, it was not the governing body which had been expected to open the door, but rather the students themselves. At this point in time, many of the participants defined their reading teacher identity from the students’ affirmation and validation of their efforts to construct a literacy-rich and safe environment for learning and social growth.

A few participants found that the door into the land of teaching opened wider because of what experiences with literacy, or the “baggage,” they brought with them from their previous travels. These individuals achieved a connection with their students and their teaching of reading by sharing with them their positive and negative life-experiences with reading, sharing specific personal life-experiences, or applying learned traits developed from their previous careers. Those who had a previous career experienced an ownership of their communication and leadership skills. Individuals who

brought these experiences into their classrooms credited them to their developed strength in professionalism and pedagogical decision making abilities.

Regardless of how slow or fast the participants found entrance into this community; they all began to take ownership of their individual reading ideologies. For most, this became clear toward the middle of their novice years. Many participants held on to personal beliefs about social literacies. They felt a strong need to integrate literacy as a tool for social change by using personal stories or pieces of literature as vehicles that could help them navigate through both academic and social development. These pieces connected the day-to-day school learning with past, present, and future life learning.

Emotions were strong among these individuals. Passion for teaching reading grew from their personal passion to make a difference that went beyond the classroom walls. Several participants experienced surprise at the students' responses and progress they were making; that they were enjoying and growing as reading teachers. For other participants, the ownership came after becoming aware of the need for more depth and critical thinking in the curriculum. These participants experimented with project-based or interactive learning which they felt brought the literature into the students' world.

The research participants reported very specific critical incidents that made a difference in their ability to traverse their new surroundings. Reflection was a critical component for all the participants. Through reflection, they made connections to what was successful, what needed to be discarded, or how they needed to adapt. Many reflected daily but all reflected at the closing of a school year. All participants felt that their reflection became more focused as they became more experienced at teaching reading. They became aware of their growing pedagogical understanding for teaching

reading and critical components of their professional identity through reflection. Others used reflection to relate to their students, but mainly reflection (including that which was done through this research project) helped the participants validate their growth by highlighting where they have been, what they have done, and where they want to go in regards to successfully teaching reading. Several participants became aware of professional traits through reflection. Whether it was a strong communicative trait, an ability to master measuring the fundamentals of student reading ability, or knowing their students needs and strengths, an established reflective routine contributed to developing professionalism.

Becoming a contributing citizen of this new land required the participants to learn and explore methods of teaching reading. A deep sense of wanting to succeed and improve led participants to embrace learning opportunities. All individuals shared critical experiences with reading support systems and many of these experiences were catalysts for making the transition from visitor to resident of this new land. A few participants mentioned their experiences of guidance and support from unofficial mentors within the educational setting or, for one individual, from an inanimate technological classroom innovation. From these experiences with these supportive mentors (even inanimate) the participants were able to define and validate an understanding for their reading teacher identity. A wide range reported very specific conferences, graduate courses, or seminars that left a dramatic impression on their pedagogical development. These participants shared that the non-traditional training format of these events provided a sense of professionalism and confidence in their ability to participate in a discourse community of reading educators. Within this group of individuals, professional training experiences

were accompanied with feelings of belonging, confidence, security, leadership, and responsibility through structured guidance. Still, there were some participants who were supported by a strong school environment which encouraged and valued their reading teacher voices. Growth for these individuals was experienced through constructive feedback and recognition. For participants who had these experiences, this form of team support was motivating as it kept the individuals striving to improve so they would continue to deserve the recognition.

What was so overwhelmingly embraced by each participant was their understanding of how they arrived at their pedagogical development. For some it might have been the involvement with the professional training, for others it might have been the relationships with colleagues or students, but all participants, at the end of their novice years teaching reading, displayed pride and ownership of their awareness of knowledge acquisition, professional growth, or pedagogical understanding as a result of these experiences. Even though most of these individuals differed in degrees of confidence and direction for continuing their growth as reading teachers, they considered it their responsibility to always be learning and growing in the field of reading instruction.

These participants began as immigrants of a new land and ended their journey of being a novice reading teacher as naturalized citizens. Some traveled rocky roads and many times needed guides to lead them in the right direction while others toughed it out and explored through trial and error –making their own map as they went. Along the way, they became enlightened observers, mindful navigators, social communicators, embracers of knowledge, and they lived passionately through the literature they shared.

The *Essence* of being a novice reading teacher

To construct the *Essence* of being a novice reading teacher, I synthesized from the *Composite Description* clusters of meaning that illustrated the horizon for understanding this experience. I then separated these clusters into groups that defined who novice reading teachers *are*, how they *feel*, what they *want*, what they *do*, what they *have*, and what they *know* as experienced by the five participants. The reader takes away from the *Essence* a clear awareness of what it was like for these individuals during their novice years of teaching reading.

Are. Novice reading teachers are newcomers and immigrants of the educational arena where they are active learners of the reading profession. They are mindful and alert to their pedagogical and professional needs. Novice reading teachers are accepting of new ideas and aware of their growing understanding of teaching reading and professional identity. They are motivated to push forward and improve on teaching reading. More often than not, they are surprised when they succeed at efforts to provide meaningful reading instruction.

Feel. Novice reading teachers start their careers feeling confused, lonely, and sometimes inadequate. They fear being viewed by others as unknowledgeable or incapable of teaching reading. They are constantly worried about not knowing enough or doing enough to help their students succeed in reading, but this is occasionally mixed with feelings of pride when they do see their students actually succeeding and interacting with literature.

Want. Novice reading teachers want to assimilate into an environment which encourages and allows for their reading teacher voice to be heard. They want guidance,

nurturing, and the opportunity to create the same environment for their students. They want guidance to be structured and to provide the feeling of belonging, confidence, security, leadership, and responsibility. Novice reading teacher want their growth to be validated through constructive feedback and recognition.

Do. Novice reading teachers connect with their students by sharing their positive/negative experiences with learning to read and life experiences of perseverance. They reflect on their personal strengths and incorporate them into their professional identity. They embrace and immerse themselves in learning opportunities that allow them to take ownership of their reading ideologies. Novice reading teachers experiment and explore reading approaches that best meet the needs of their students and their teaching style. They participate in discourse communities where they can interact with other reading professionals, and they enjoy the awareness of growing as a reading teacher.

Have. Novice reading teachers have pride and ownership in their awareness of knowledge acquisition, professional growth, and pedagogical understanding as a result of participation in experiences that support the teaching of reading such as unofficial mentors, graduate school, or professional training. They have personal beliefs about reading philosophies which assist them in constructing literacy-rich and safe learning environments. They have different degrees of confidence at different times during their novice years. Novice reading teachers have a deep sense of wanting to succeed, a passion to make a difference, and for teaching reading.

Know. By the end of their novice years, novice reading teachers know their students' needs and strengths. They know the fundamentals of assessing student reading ability; they know State reading standards and how to adapt, modify, or enhance to meet

the needs of the students; and they know when and how to provide necessary reading interventions for struggling students. Novice reading teachers know that they have a responsibility to continue learning and growing in the field of reading instruction to better prepare and challenge themselves as professional reading teachers.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to explore the ways in which five reading teachers, in grades three through six, have constructed a personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identities from their experiences during their novice years of teaching. This chapter presented each participant's experiences as they were told through the three projects: (a) artifacts collected in their Memory Boxes; (b) mini-journaling about their experiences; and (c) a final individual interview. Through listening and reflecting, I analyzed the five participants' experiences in order to conceptualize the essence of being a novice reading teacher. This data provided depth and insight for answering the following research questions,

1. What is the essence of being a novice reading educator for these participants?
 - a. How have the participants constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development from their experiences during their novice teaching years?
 - b. How have the participants constructed personal understanding of their professional identities from their experiences during their novice teaching years?

- c. What critical incidents have occurred that have helped shape their pedagogy and identity?
 - d. Do the reflective descriptions reference any form of critical pedagogy?
2. How did this phenomenological research experience impact their identity and pedagogical ownership?

I then presented the *Textual Description* and *Structural Description* which provided the descriptions of what each participant experienced during their novice years of teaching reading and how these experiences possibly came to be meaningful for each novice reading teacher. This was followed by a discussion about the combined experiences for the research group, or the *Composite Description*. The final section of this chapter presented the collective understanding or the *Essence* of being a novice reading teacher for these participants. In the following chapter, I summarize what I have discovered about being a novice reading teacher, how this relates to my research questions as well as to prior literature, and discusses the implication and the outcomes of this study.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Outcomes, and Implications

Summary

In this final chapter, I followed the guidelines of Moustakas' phenomenological research method to summarize my study. The summary also outlines the specific sections of this chapter.

Chapter 1. In chapter one, I called for a need for a deeper understanding of how novice reading teachers constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identity from their experiences during their novice years of teaching. I discussed that if teachers are to be viewed as intellectuals capable of making pedagogical decisions, they must take on the responsibility of charting the course for their professional growth. Through exploring the life-stories novice reading teachers experienced during their development, a better understanding of the critical incidents involved can provide useful information which may help future novice reading teachers better traverse these years of their professional growth. With this charge, I then presented the focus of this study to be the following:

1. What was the essence of being a novice reading teacher for these participants?
 - a. How did participants construct personal understanding of their pedagogical development from their experiences during their novice teaching years?

- b. How did participants construct personal understanding of their professional identities from their experiences during their novice teaching years?
 - c. What critical incidents occurred that helped shape their pedagogy and identity?
 - d. Did the reflective descriptions reference any form of critical pedagogy?
2. How did this phenomenological research experience impact their identity and pedagogical ownership?

Chapter 2. In chapter two, I thoroughly reviewed the literature on teacher change, novice teachers, pedagogical development and professional identity. Since there was a lack of specific research on novice reading teachers, I expanded the review to include all novice teachers. In the review of literature, teacher development saw a shift from stagnate stages of concerns that a teacher must overcome to advance in their career; to a theory of ebb and flow development based on teacher's experiences, application of knowledge, and a reflective nature which challenges their understandings and aids in forming an identity. Presently, researchers continue to challenge the notion that novice teachers are incapable of pedagogical decision making with studies that highlight novice teachers actively applying reflective pedagogical practices. The literature in this area called for the continued research of the novice teachers' experiences and how they used them to understand their teaching and professional identity; specifically, the critical incidents that occurred during these experiences which acted as change agents.

Chapter 3. In chapter three, I provided a historical and theoretical description for employing a phenomenological research framework with a critical pedagogy lens to explore the ways in which five South, Southeast, and West Texas reading teachers constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identities from their experiences during their novice years of teaching. I discussed the three data collecting methods used to gather rich descriptions of the experience: the memory box, mini-journaling project, and final interview. I then described in detail the data analysis process of phenomenology and explained the rationale for using a narrative re-presentation for retelling the stories.

Chapter 4. In chapter four, through narrative re-presentation of the *Textual and Structural Descriptions*, I retold the lived-experiences that the five novice reading teachers participating in the study shared with me. The individual *Essence* for these participants portrayed that they experienced their novice years of teaching reading as either an enlightened observer, as one engulfed by life literacies, as an embracer of knowledge, as a social communicator, or as a mindful navigator. Collectively, I found there to be six core themes commonly shared by the participants. Novice reading teachers: (a) experienced using prior lived-experiences to impact reading pedagogy, (b) experienced concern for students' social, cultural and academic well-being, (c) experienced active reflection, (d) experienced making pedagogical and professional connections through specific reading support systems which developed their philosophy for reading, (e) experienced awareness of growth as a result of these systems, and (f) experienced recognition of strengths attributing to their professional and pedagogical identity. Based on the six core themes, this chapter ended with the narrative re-

presentation of the *Composite Description* for all the participants as well as the *Essence* for being a novice reading teacher participating in this study.

Chapter 5. In this final chapter of my dissertation, I will distinguish the findings from the exploration of novice reading teachers' experiences from those presented in the review of literature. Also included in this chapter are the limitations encountered in the present study, as well as suggestions for future studies of novice reading teachers. I will address the implication of my findings for the novice teacher, teacher education programs, and for professional trainings and trainers. Finally, staying true to Moustakas' framework of phenomenological research, this chapter will conclude with my reflection of the implications that this study of novice reading teachers has had and will have on myself as a researcher and as an educator of teachers.

Distinguishing Finding from Prior Research

Using the six core themes that were uncovered while exploring the experiences of the five novice reading teachers, I will relate the findings of my study to the prior literature and make distinctions between my study and those discussed in the review of literature through comparing the similarities and differences. Making this connection to prior research confirms previous findings and exposes new information from my study that will add to the literature on novice reading teachers' development.

Novice reading teachers:

Experienced using prior experiences to impact reading pedagogy. Novice reading teachers revealed that forming a connection with their students by sharing their

positive/negative experiences with learning to read and with life experiences of perseverance resulted in a stronger learning environment and identity as a reading teacher. The process of building their pedagogical ownership and professional identity came from being mindful, alert and aware of their own learning styles and using that knowledge to make pedagogical decisions. Many of the participants found that using their knowledge from a previous career helped build communication skills with students and parents.

Scholarly literature supports these findings of developing a professional identity through interacting with the school cultures and sharing lived-experiences with students (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Flores & Day, 2006; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994; Lambson, 2010; Olson & Craig, 2001; Rippon & Martin, 2006). Specifically, the findings from Flores and Day (2006) connect emotions and socialization as significant components in professional identity formation. Consistent with my findings, they found that past experiences with their own school learning played a strong role in shaping teacher identity as well as creating a rewarding bond with the profession. Hall et al.'s (2010) research also supports this experience when they found that teachers, who knew their own literacy biographies, included those experiences (oral narratives) in their pedagogical development.

Sharing life stories was found to be a critical incident for my participants, which is supported by Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe (1994). They reported that the actual event of telling lived-experiences created awareness for the value of incorporating “self” in pedagogical thinking. The act of sharing stories strengthened identity by validating

beliefs on matters of pedagogy, student learning, and professional duties such as communication with parents. Additionally, Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) findings on 'in-classroom' stories complements the experiences my participants had with their stories. As with their research, my participants also found their classroom to be a safe and private place to share openly; building freedom, ownership, and control of their novice years teaching reading. What was not specifically found in the prior novice teacher research was the uniqueness of my participant's specific awareness of using this critical incident of past lived-experiences to impact their teaching and to influence their students learning.

Experienced concern for students' social, cultural, and academic well-being.

Many of the participants found that their concerns for their students' total well-being developed ownership of their classroom and pedagogy through the need to guide, nurture and provide for the students social and academic needs. This resulted in a commitment to make their classroom a safe environment for learning, living and growing. These teachers developed beliefs about social literacies and felt a strong need to integrate literacy as a tool for social change by using personal stories or pieces of literature as vehicles that could help them navigate through both academic and social development. Through these pieces of literature, the novice reading teachers connected the day-to-day school learning with the day-to-day life learning for the students. Passion for teaching reading came from their need to make connections between literature and life.

The act of studying the life-stories of the children they are teaching is a notion supported by van Manen (1991) who viewed this to be a critical component to develop

pedagogy and identity for a teacher. Flores and Day (2006) also found that teachers who described the profession of teaching to be rewarding included the responsibility of caring for the “whole” student both socially and academically as part of their identity. Also true for the participants in my study, Flores and Day found that the more teachers developed an understanding of their students’ needs and connected them to their own pedagogical development, the stronger they identified with the profession.

Again, prior literature supports the finding of using social literacy as a part of my participant’s pedagogical tool bag. Through conversation that the text provided along with the personal experience connected to the text, definition for understanding society can be bridged through the narrative nature of literature. The teacher identifies herself to the students as someone who has critically read the text and made connections to it to help explain her place in society. This research supports how my participants created an environment that built trust and openness through literacy (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Giroux, 1990; Hall et al., 2010; Kincheloe, 2005; Rogers et al., 2005). Kincheloe (2005) argued that a critical pedagogy that accomplishes such a task helps the teacher look beyond the walls of the classroom; helping themselves and their students develop a social theory of the world and how they fit in it. Several of my participants found themselves pushing their reading curriculum outside their walls. They made it a point to know their students’ social lives so that the literature could help them make sense of the sometimes chaotic world around them. This form of critical pedagogy involves the teacher reaching out to find what the community values and then to use this connection to form reading instruction (Carrington & Luke, 1997). My participants used their critical ability to see in the literature more than just the skills to teach, but also the life lessons to learn. Although,

this was an act that was revealed in all of the participants, it was not clear from my findings if they had developed awareness for understanding that the concept of critical pedagogy can be a change agent for identity. These teachers may have been unknowingly using the elements of critical pedagogy but not the theory.

All of the participants included the need for understanding their students' cultural environment as an important part of their identity and pedagogical development. Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) advocate for this as a way for helping teachers transition into the school culture. Although these teachers did this on their own and at varying degrees of depth, the research validates that introducing new teachers to the social and geographic makeup of their student population will help ease induction and better prepare teachers for the psychological and emotional aspects of teaching.

Experienced recognition of strengths attributing to their professional and pedagogical identity. These five novice reading teachers expressed that their growth was validated through constructive feedback and recognition. They constantly worried about not knowing enough or doing enough to help their students succeed in reading but began to replace these worries as validation for teaching efforts from students and others in the school environment was provided. Many of the participants defined their reading teacher identity and validated their pedagogical decisions through the students' affirmation of their efforts to construct a literacy rich and safe learning environment. Several participants experienced surprise at the students' response and progress as well as their enjoyment of teaching reading as a result of their validated efforts. For three participants, along with the student validation, they were supported by a strong school environment

which encouraged and valued their reading teacher voice. Through this support, they were given recognition and feedback for their efforts which provided motivation to continue to learn and improve as a reading teacher.

The worries and concerns of inadequacy and insecurities that the participants experienced are documented in many studies on teacher stage research (Burden, 1982; Fuller, 1969; Glassberg & Oja, 1981; Katz, 1972; Watts, 1980). Finding validation through students is also supported in the literature. Deal and Chatman (1989) found that the teachers they studied relied on the students to be the primary source to validate, dismantle or extend teaching beliefs. Also supported by Schon (1983), the surprise felt by many teachers of my study when their students succeeded or when they shared affirmation for their teaching efforts became a powerful ally for development. When the teachers became surprised at an occurrence or outcome of an experience, they reflected on this and how it contributed to validating their understanding of teaching reading. Much like Zeichner and Tabachnick's (1985) findings, my teachers found ways to work through their concerns and hold onto their beliefs. What was distinctive to my study was that while the participants did encounter stressful concerns, they found positive ways to re-shape them into identity forming critical incidents through student, collegial validation, and out-of-school support systems.

It has been documented that teachers want structure and an environment that provides support, guidance, and validation (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Kardos & Johnson, 2007; Kauffman, Johnson, Liu & Peske, 2002; Rippon & Martin, 2006). The teachers in my study also needed recognition by school

colleagues and students regarding their impact and influence of student success. This recognition helped to guide their understanding of school, pedagogy, and identity. An observation worth mentioning is that of the support given in the first year to the three teachers who went through the alternative teacher certification program. All three participants mentioned the value they placed on having regular ‘outside of school’ supervisors come into their classrooms to observe. The assurance and guidance given in a positive atmosphere by these individuals helped to ground their teaching beliefs. Data were not present on whether these guiding individuals also encouraged and guided these novice reading teachers to participate in reflective practices in any form.

Although the school environment has a direct effect on a teacher’s developing identity (Blasé, 1985; Hoffman et al., 2005; Kuzmic, 1994; Maloch et al., 2003; Smagorinsky et al., 2004), participants in my study developed their identity and pedagogical beliefs with and without the support of the school culture. While many had a strong environment, like Kilgore, Ross and Zbikowski (1990) one participant had little to no discourse within their school community but still created ways to validate his/her teaching through their personal commitment. For my participants, these experiences with validation through recognition (personal or cultural) acted as exchange agents for “cultural capital” to be valued. When their actions and beliefs were valued by the environment, these acquired ‘tokens’ were exchanged for value which helped to build ownership and identity as a contributing member of the teaching society (Carrington & Luke, 1997).

Experienced active reflection. Novice reading teachers in this study shared that they were mindful and alert to their pedagogical and professional needs. Reflection was a critical component for all the participants and contributed to developing this awareness. They reflected on their personal strengths and incorporate them into their professional identity. Revealed through the thick descriptions gathered during the study, these novice reading teachers used reflection to experiment and explore reading approaches that would best meet the needs of their students and their teaching style. Through reflection, they made connections to what was successful, what needed to be discarded or how they needed to adapt. This validated their growth by highlighting where they have been, what they have done and where they want to go in regards to teaching reading.

The most recent literature on teacher development (late-1990's to early 2000s) supports this inward looking movement for novice teachers. Studies beginning at this time focus on the causation for growth and how critical incidents experienced in a teacher's career acted as change agents for development. As found in my study, growth was documented to occur more rhythmically as a teacher challenged and validated their pedagogy and identity through reflective action. This was found to allow the teachers in this study to redefine and readjust their pedagogy and identity (Berci, 2006; Clandinin, 1989; Conway & Clark, 2003; Dall'Alba & Sandberg, 2006; Fried & Amit, 2005; Shulman, 1987; Snow, Griffin, and Burns, 2005; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001; Weasmer, Woods, & Coburn, 2008).

Snow, Griffin, and Burns (2005) found that for the reading teachers they studied, as they gained knowledge and experience in teaching reading they also gained identity

and ownership. This can also be seen occurring for my participants of this study. As the participants validated beliefs about their teaching of reading, they monitored and reflected taking on the roll of problem-solver and problem-poser to understand pedagogy and identity (Dall'Alba & Sandberg, 2006; Shulman, 1987). Teaching took on a research based interaction for most of the participants who used trial and error to create pedagogical ownership through the experiences of success and failure. This kept them in a constant role of asking questions that helped to understand the student's needs and their own, which helped to build their content knowledge for teaching reading (Kansa'nen et al., 2000; Schon, 1983; Shulman, 1987). Also supported by Kansa'nen et al. (2000), these teachers were turning 'knowing' into 'acting' by asking questions about their teaching. Additionally, the literature supports that the participants in my study developed pedagogical thinking which could be identified in degrees, grew with experience and varied with the participants (Leven & Ammon, 1992).

What was not clearly evident from my findings was the cognitive awareness of the theoretical impact reflecting had on their development. These participants reflected with praxis-like actions. They understood that it had identity forming value and was a natural process of learning to teach (also found true by Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994); but through the conversations we had, it was not clear that they connected these actions to be specific components for developing a critical pedagogy that had a goal or direction for the reflection. It is not to say that the participants did not understand the theory of critical pedagogy, it was just not specifically highlighted that the knowledge was understood through the conversations based on the lack of its lexicon.

Experienced making pedagogical and professional connections through specific reading support systems that developed their philosophy for reading. The novice reading teachers of this study were motivated and active learners of the reading profession. They were willing to accept new ideas and took advantage of opportunities to deepen their reading pedagogy. They expressed a need at the beginning of their novice years for guidance, nurture and the opportunity to create the same environment for their students.

All participants created some form of discourse communities where they interacted with other reading professionals through their support systems which changed or strengthened teaching beliefs. These ranged from unofficial mentors (not a mentor through an official induction program), supervisors, the curriculum, professional conferences, graduate courses and seminars. Previous studies support the use of critical incidents as change agents. These studies focused on the individual acts that help to develop pedagogy and identity such as professional experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Flores & Day, 2006; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994; Lambson, 2010; Olson & Craig, 2001; Rippon & Martin, 2006), experiences with curriculum (Hall et al., 2010; Valencia, Place, Martin, & Grossman, 2006), and developing reading content knowledge and training (Hoffman et al., 2005; Maloch et al., 2003; Shulman, 1987). Distinctive to my study is the presence of multiple critical incidents evident by the participants' assertive talk about their growth as a result of the incidents. Through the multiple experiences with critical incidents, the experience of support provided the feeling of belonging, confidence, security, leadership, professionalism, and responsibility. These feelings validated and defined their understanding for being a reading teacher.

Most of the research exploring support systems for new teachers focuses within the school environment such as official mentor programs (Andrews & Martin, 2003; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). The teachers of my study did not rely on official mentors for support. Most participants used out-of-school support systems while two used a combination of both in-school and out-of-school support systems. One of the participants was initially assigned an official mentor, but her experience with the mentor created a negative influence due to a mismatch of philosophy and poor mentor training. Such negative influence can also be found to occur among mentor/mentee in the literature (Rippon & Martin, 2006; Smagorinsky et al., 2004). This participant, like two others in the study, found support from university courses and outside training to form their discourse communities.

When in-school support (colleagues and curriculum) was used, they experienced guidance and structure along with collegial collaboration due to a supportive environment. Positive growth was experienced when support provided a gradual release of control (Chubbuck, Clift, Allard & Quinian, 2001; Levin, Hammer & Coffey, 2009). Most of the participants developed independence and individuality as they gradually released their need for the more structured support systems such as set curriculum guide. Shulman's (1987) position on the development of pedagogical content knowledge supports the findings from my study. Although, one participant felt the prescribed curriculum somewhat restricting, she found other ways to strengthen her pedagogy through using social literacy. As the participants grew in their understanding of the content knowledge needed for teaching reading (although at different degrees of growth), they also grew in their pedagogical decision making and classroom autonomy. Other

literature also supports the autonomy and attention to student's needs when reading content knowledge has been developed (Hall et al., 2010; Lambson, 2010; Hoffman et al., 2005; Maloch et al., 2003; Valencia, Place, Martin, & Grossman, 2006).

There has been literature on the collaborative nature of reading support systems, but most research on growth through collaboration purposely exposes the participants to the critical incident rather than exploring how they were drawn to that form of support (Raphael et al., 2001; Roe, 2004; Rogers et al., 2005; Socal, 2004). What is unique to my finding on this form of reading support system is the desire from the participants to seek out support systems that treated them as professionals with discourse interaction rather than as passive learners. They craved thought provoking discussions regarding reading instruction. This created a space for them to socially construct knowledge and build ownership and identity through the intertextuality of the atmosphere (Bahktin, 1994; Bartlett, 1995; Gee, 1989; Kristeva, 1986; Porter, 1986). Again the literature supports advantages to this type of support systems as spaces that allow them to express concerns and explore pedagogical thinking without judgment (Chubbuck, Clift, Allard, & Quinian, 2001).

Experienced awareness of growth as a result of these systems. The participants shared that they started their career feeling confused, lonely and sometimes inadequate. They feared being viewed by others as unknowledgeable or incapable of teaching reading. Roughly around their third year of teaching, and through their reflective actions and experiences with critical incidents; these novice reading teachers developed pride and ownership in their awareness of knowledge acquisition, professional growth and

pedagogical understanding. These participants felt professional when they knew their students needs and strengths, the fundamentals of assessing student reading ability, state standards, and could evolve pedagogy to meet their needs. Early stage theory literature says that they should not be able to accomplish these critical responsibilities as a teacher so early in their career, but this was evident through the thick descriptions from our conversations (Burden, 1982; Fuller, 1969; Glassberg & Oja, 1981; Katz, 1972; Watts, 1980).

My findings also concur with Grisham's (2005) finding that university literacy programs do impact novice teacher beliefs regarding teaching reading, and additionally it serves as a support system. Many of my participants were aware of the support their course work provided. They found themselves referring to pieces of literature or course discussions acquired during their teacher preparation program to assist them in their first years. Although most of my participants struggled with the typical transition period upon entering their career as reading teachers; unlike Grisham's novice reading teachers, my participants seemed to become stronger in their constructivist beliefs for teaching reading by the third year as a result of their support systems. Perhaps Grisham would have observed such an awareness of her participants' evolving growth and beliefs had the longitudinal study been extended through the entire novice years of teaching reading. Such an extension might have allowed the participants to overcome the period of transition and take more ownership of their previous beliefs for teaching reading.

It seems clear through the findings of this study, that these teachers' awareness of growth through their support systems follows the teacher development theory presented

since the start of the new millennium. These theories advocate that growth emerges as an elevator fueled by self-awareness and attainment towards ownership of professional knowledge and that it is fluid in its movement in and out of different levels of learning at different times of their career (Berci, 2006; Conway & Clark, 2003; Dall'Alba & Sandberg, 2006; Fried & Amit, 2005; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001; Weasmer, Woods, & Coburn, 2008). It also answers some of the questions these researchers posed regarding what is specifically being developed and how it is being nurtured during the novice years of teaching reading. My participants viewed themselves as learners of the reading teacher profession. Snow, Griffin, and Burns (2005) would describe these participants intermingling with the *declarative, situated, stable, expert, and reflective* notions of becoming a reading teacher. For example, Marie found herself reverting back to the declarative piece of the developmental pie in her fourth year as she tried new approaches to teaching reading. Her awareness of the need to incorporate poetry into her curriculum (something which she lacked confidence for teaching) led to experimenting with avenues to build her content knowledge of poetry.

Participating in this phenomenological research study was considered by the participants to be a part of their reflective actions they regularly did as a teacher. Through this study, they found themselves validating their prior experiences and planning ahead for the future, no longer as a novice reading teacher but as a situated and stable teacher of reading. Husserl (1973) would say that during their novice years, they were participating in the idea of “judicative doing.” He would explain that these individuals were going through their life making judgments about each phenomenon they encounter. They clarified their opinions of their experiences as a novice reading teacher by making

connections to known understandings or creating a new understanding for the experience. Through the awareness and ownership of their understanding that transcended from their own personal reflections, these experiences were embraced as identity forming agents. Husserl would also say that these phenomenological research-like actions of self-investigation are absolutely crucial to help explain and connect meaning to identity (1973). Although a deeper phenomenological co-researcher bond with my participants would have been preferable, the interactions with the three projects did impact their awareness of growth as a novice reading teacher as expressed by each participant.

Discussion

In reflecting on the findings of my study, it is my assumption that these teachers' development and awareness of their reflective nature is possibly a result of the school system. If we refer back to the literature of teacher development and the timeline of student development (this study, pp. 14-15; 19-21); while in grade school, three of the five participants would have experienced curriculum and teaching that used the knowledge of cognitive development with higher order thinking opportunities in their classrooms. Being exposed to opportunities for student-led learning may have naturally created a routine for these individuals to question their experiences and make decisions based on them. This could also explain why research in the late 1990s to early 2000s began advocating that novice teachers did have the cognitive abilities to develop deeper pedagogy. Cognitive theory had trickled down to the classrooms enough for higher level thinking to create a different breed of student thinkers who then became a different breed of teachers. It does not appear from the review of literature that this was accounted for in

early teacher development research. Again, this assumption from my findings explains one of the causation for reflective teacher development that had been called by researchers to explore in the last decade (Conway & Clark, 2003; Moyer & Husman, 2000; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001).

It is then possible to assume that because the 1970s and early 1980s had not established such cognitive theory for teaching in all classrooms, the novice teachers they researched may possibly have not been able to give reflective attention to their teaching due to a different set of learning beliefs. This provides evidence that as a product of the late twentieth century school systems, novice teachers of the new millennium are in fact different from their more veteran counterparts in more ways than just the number of years teaching and attention to their development is warranted (Greenebaum, 2009).

Limitations

There will always be the possibility that research will have challenges to overcome. Angen (2000) discussed that using member checks can create problems as participants may reassess their initial responses or disagree with the researchers interpretations. Those involved in the member checks may be more removed from the issues than the researcher, thus impacting the results of the analysis. These problems were not encountered during my study. All participants concurred with the findings and agreed with the interpretations of their experiences.

A limitation for this study could be found in the gender. With all participants being female, diversity in gender may provide alternative findings. An additional limitation may be found in the individual participants. I was willing to accept individuals

who wished to volunteer for the study and who met the criteria. These volunteers may have wanted to have their voice heard and therefore presented a different experience from those who were not willing to participate (Greenebaum, 2009). Additionally, the nature of retelling the lived-experiences of individuals could also be a limitation as the participants shared their stories as they remembered them which may not necessarily be the way the experience actually occurred (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994). Finally, a limitation for conducting phenomenological research could be found in the weak role the participants held as co-researchers. With busy lives, both professional and personal, the participants did not have the time or understanding to thoroughly participate in the research project as a co-researcher of their lived-experiences.

Future Studies

In this study, I collected data from five novice reading teachers through three sources: the memory box, mini-journaling project, and a final interview. The three data sources provided rich descriptions for understanding the essence of being a novice reading teacher for these five participants. While five teachers is an acceptable amount of participants for a phenomenological research study it does not assume to encapsulate the entire understanding of this experience. Enlarging the group would provide more conversation to deepen the understanding of being a novice reading teacher.

Purposely selecting novice reading teachers who viewed themselves to have had a positive development during their first four to five years teaching strengthened this study. This allowed for diversity in both background and experience, but not for gender. Creating a study which also includes male participants may yield different or extend the

data about the experience. Additionally, in future phenomenological research of the experiences of novice reading teachers, the design should incorporate the opportunity for the participants to learn the theory of phenomenology to strengthen their role as co-researcher. Furthermore, what I believe to be critical of this study was providing the participants with the opportunity to share their lived-experiences in narrative forms. Additional studies should continue using narratives, life-stories, or biographies to gather data and retell these experiences in narrative form. Something worth mentioning again is my observation of the positive support during the first year for the three novice reading teachers who went through the alternative teacher certification program. Further investigation on the regular support given throughout the year and how this support was positive may provide insight into the development of the novice teacher during their first year.

Extending the research even farther inward would be to continue the investigation of how the identity of a novice reading teacher is formed when they become consciously aware through reflective learning experiences. Researchers should explore what the impact would be if novice reading teachers during their preservice and novice inservice years were purposely exposed to teacher development theory such as Berci's (2006) metaphoric *staircase* or Snow, Griffin, and Burns' (2005) *pie* format, and then used this knowledge as tangible benchmarks for becoming self-aware of their pedagogical and professional growth. How would this influence the types of critical incidents encountered during their novice years? How would they use this understanding and awareness of their own development to construct pedagogical ownership and professional identity?

Continuing this quest will help both teacher educators and novice reading teachers better understand the cognitive experiences that a new millennium teacher would encounter.

Outcomes and Implications

Outcomes for this Study. Trustworthy research is charged with moving the present understanding of the topic forward and generating future possibilities for new directions. It should be viewed as the catalysis for transformative action and should be viewed as helpful to those who have interest in the topic (Angen, 2000).

I explored the ways in which five South, Southeast, and West Texas novice reading teachers constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identities during the first four to five years of teaching. It created a working definition of the 21st century novice reading teacher including their wants and needs that will better aid other novice teachers and those responsible for nurturing these individuals to become more critically aware of their growth as reading teachers. The life cycle of a teacher is accelerating faster than these novice teachers can develop and mold their identities. Learning from the lived-experiences of novice reading teachers can help move their development inward and deeper which will aid in the ownership of their pedagogy and identity as a professional. Furthermore, this knowledge provides a possible blue print for “stuck” teachers in need of setting their development in motion for traveling down such a path (Berci, 2006; Conway & Clark, 2003; Moyer & Husman, 2000; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001; Watts, 1980). Adding to the growing understanding of novice reading teachers assists in meeting (using a reading developmental phrase) the “instructional level” of novice reading teachers rather than

keeping them at a “frustrational level” of “hit and miss” trainings that neither capture these teachers’ needs, nor moves them to develop at their own critical “independent level” of learning. The insights uncovered during this study about the experiences of novice reading teachers provides valuable guidance towards improving the journey these teachers will take during their first five years of teaching. Below highlights the implications for the novice reading teacher, teacher education programs and professional training.

Implications for the novice reading teacher

Novice reading teachers are already charting a new course for teachers of the new millennium whether they are aware of it or not. They bring to the classroom as 21st century teachers new ways of thinking, living and learning that will impact student learning (Kress, 2003; Greenebaum, 2009). The findings of my research connect directly to their development. To aid in forming their reading teacher identity, novice reading teachers will need to look inward at their biographical stories to first know themselves and the critical incidents that have made a positive or negative impact on their literacy lives. They will need to take the opportunity to learn about their teaching community including their students and their social needs. To learn more about their teaching community, they can take tours of their school neighborhoods and reach out to the parents on a more personal level rather than just the parent-teacher conference day. Making such social connections has been shown by my participants to positively impact classroom management, student performance and professionalism.

Based on the findings of my research, novice reading teachers will need to form a critical eye for their professional growth. They will need to seek out support systems which offer reading teachers a platform for discussion about method and theory. Ways novice reading teachers can do this is by forming collaborative relationships with reading professionals such as other reading teachers, mentors or consultants, enroll in graduate level courses, become members of organizations such as (but not limited to) the International Reading Association or The National Council of Teachers of English, participate in local literacy conferences coordinated by their local state education service center or universities, or request through their district professional development department to attend seminars or workshops that meet the needs of their developing pedagogical content knowledge base.

Finally, based on the literature and the descriptions from my participants, novice reading teachers will need to become more aware of their own course of development. They need to be cognitive of the level of their development and of the critical incidents that support growth. To do this they will need to take on the roll of teacher as researcher. Novice reading teachers will need to approach their teaching in ways that will allow them to learn from their successes and failures. Setting goals to purposely reflect periodically about their reading instruction will create a personal dialogue about where they have been, what they have accomplished, and set goals to explore more reading methods. One possibility could be to create a 'reflection/research' notebook as a place to record thoughts and pose questions about what they did and what they would like to find out about their reading pedagogy. Such reflective action will socially and professionally build capital for their teaching efforts and lead them to own their pedagogical decisions. It will

allow novice reading teachers to interact intellectually with other reading professionals and build a foundation for knowing who they are as a reading teacher in the 21st century.

Implications for teacher education programs

I will focus on two areas for teacher education programs, preservice course work and extended support supervision, which would directly be effected by the findings of my study of novice reading teachers.

Preservice course work. Teacher education course work could evolve and grow deeper by weaving in current components of teacher development theory into its curriculum. An ideal place to start would be to reconstruct the course work on child development to refocus on *learner* development which would include the teacher as a learner. In such a course, preservice teachers would begin to make connections between the stages of cognitive development for students with those of teacher development and themselves. While preservice teachers are learning about such theorists as Bloom, Gardner, Vygotsky, and Dewey and how their theories on student learning impacts their teaching; they should also be learning about theories of teacher development from theorist such as Schon, Shulman, Snow et al., or Berci on how these theories impacts their development as a teacher (teacher education programs would distinguish theoretical preferences for their programs).

Beginning with the *learner* development course, preservice reading teachers would then reflect on their developing beliefs about teaching reading during and after each additional course and track their movement through the levels of teacher development. With technology at our fingertips, departments of Education could create a

database to track the development of a preservice reading teacher over the course of their studies and into their novice years of teaching reading which could serve as a portfolio of development. Modifying software programs such as the one found at the Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi's ELITE graduate program (<https://elite.tamucc.edu/indicator>), reading departments could provide the same structure for a developing reading teacher. This software program uses an 'Academic Thermometer' to track the progress on graduate level work by having the user make a quick click of a button sent through email. Adaption for novice reading teachers could be as follows:

1. If using Berci's (2006) *staircase* metaphor for teacher development, a software program could have a preservice reading teacher see a visual staircase that defines each platform and gives descriptions of possible feelings or actions (see pages 44-46 in this study). They would click on where they see themselves traveling on this staircase as well as selecting possible critical incidents that they are experiencing along the way.
2. If using Snow, Griffin, and Burns' (2005) model, they could interact with a pie formation that provides descriptions of both knowing and acting for each piece and possibly shade in portions based on their developing knowledge base (see pages 40-42 in this study). This tangible and interactive process would aid in forming conceptual understanding of their identity and develop the ability to identify elements of who they are as a developing reading teacher, where they are in the development and what critical incidents are shaping their travels. The program could send charted snapshots of their development to show how their

teacher development ebbs and flows between levels of knowing. Through this interaction, preservice and novice inservice reading teachers would then become literate in thinking, speaking, reading and writing about their own development as a reading teacher which are attributes of 21st century learning (Knobel and Lankshear, 2007).

A final component of such a program would be to manufacture this information on a tangible flip-chart or interactive pie turn-table. Like the participant of my study who used her curriculum guides and Bloom's question flip charts "like security blankets", novice teachers could frequently interact with the chart to visually and tactilely become awareness of movement in their own teacher development.

Although this implication is directed for the teacher education programs, public school districts would benefit from managing the induction of new teachers with such an approach as well.

Extended support systems. Participants in my study wanted guidance, recognition, and nonjudgmental recommendations on their development as a reading teacher. They feared letting members of their school community know of their concerns and looked for safe landscapes that could provide private support. Extending preservice teachers' undergraduate training from the university into their novice years of teaching reading could provide such a safe landscape for discourse collaboration.

Reading education programs could provide a post-baccalaureate seminar or practicum course which provided guidance and supervision throughout a semester. To avoid adding to the stress novice teachers encounter during their survival years, this

seminar would be a 'for credit only' course. It would meet face-to-face for training and discuss specific reading instruction. It would be an extension of the literacy methods taken during their undergraduate courses but provide real-time application and reflection. Included in the course would be a once a six weeks visit by the university liaison to the novice teachers' classrooms providing guidance, observations and recommendations on their reading instruction progress. Teachers of my study valued the regular acknowledgment from outside support systems such as consultants and alternative teacher certification supervisors. They credited professional growth as a reading teacher to their presence. Such an addition to the services teacher education programs already provide would aid in filling a need called for by novice reading teachers.

Implications for professional training and trainers

As expressed by my participants, novice reading teachers want guidance to be structured and to provide the feeling of belonging, confidence, security, leadership, and responsibility. They want their professional training to be *professional*, not just something to attend arbitrarily. Professional trainers can learn from this study that trainings need to be redesigned to treat the audience as active-thinking participants rather than passive receivers of knowledge. Training sessions need to provide for the novice teacher opportunity to learn about curriculum development and how to be problem-solvers and posers who use their creativity to become owners of their knowledge of teaching reading. Professional training needs to cater to the novice reading teacher by creating a space where their voice can be heard.

One way professional trainers can meet the needs of novice reading teachers is by creating ‘conference’ like venues for learning. My participants shared that when they were allowed to dialogue in small breakout sessions after the whole group presentation, they felt equal and knowledgeable. Professional trainers should provide an array of sessions or workshops that cater to the needs of novice, stable, and master reading teachers. Participants of this type of training could then select sessions that meet the need for their personal growth. Trainers should also incorporate the opportunity for participants to register for follow-up meetings that can answer questions about pedagogy formed after processing or applying the learned information.

By having the opportunity to select personal learning tracks within the overall development theme of the training session, novice reading teachers better learn about themselves and the gaps in their reading pedagogy that needs to be filled. Additionally, trainers can solicit to previous attendees the opportunity to present their own sessions/workshops on their understanding and application of the information taken from earlier training sessions. By incorporating these elements in professional training, novice reading teachers take an active role as professional presenters, participate in the “reflective cycle of discussion, planning, implementing, data collection, [and] presenting/disseminating” (Rogers et al., 2005, p. 349).

A final implication for professional training is not a new concept to teacher development. Professional training can no longer be something prescribed for the good of the whole. If novice reading teachers are to commit to the profession, the profession needs to grant them the responsibility to make decisions relating to their individual growth (Christensen, et al., 1983; Duffy & Roehler, 1986; Watts, 1980).

Conclusion and implications for the researcher

My curiosities about how novice reading teachers constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical ownership and professional identity began as a personal quest to better understand how my own identity as a reading teacher may have formed. Now at the end of this journey, it has also become a professional quest to use this new knowledge as a change agent in the field of reading for evolving how teacher educators prepare novice reading teachers.

When starting my doctoral studies, I was aware that I had developed into a passionate reading teacher because of my experiences with critical incidents. I knew my literacy biography included struggling as a reader and writer growing up. At an early age, I was sensitive to the awareness that I was not in the higher “color bird” reading group. Being a slow reader was definitely a contributing factor but it was fueled by my inability to see the segments in words or phonetic patterns. It is interesting that as I recall these memories, the odd numbered grade levels seem to have left the most scars. In first grade, the awareness that others were more advanced became obvious. Longer spelling tests and reading materials began in third grade. Memorization was the only method of learning presented to me which proved to be ineffective. Then in seventh grade, I was confronted with the awareness of the consequence my poor reading and writing had on my ability to participate in extra-curricular activities. I remember the constant effort it took just to stay above water with my school work for both my parents and myself.

Although I struggled during the grade school years, I always considered myself to be a learner. I enjoyed reading. Specifically, I loved reading a scary book under my blanket with a flashlight late at night. The problem was that this genre was not the

selected genre to discuss in school. I think that because I read such different genres (horror, mystery and science fiction); I became more liberal in my interpretations as there was little structure to my comprehension habits. Of all these vividly impactful experiences, the 11th grade year left the largest scar. That year we read *A Scarlet Letter* and I made a connection with the genre. Having developed a quiet academic personality over the years, the story structure lured me into wanting to take a risk to participate in the classroom discussion (a risk I regretted taking). This teacher looked at me after I commented and vocally announced that I could not just make things up about what the characters were thinking or doing and that if I could not contribute correctly to the class discussion I should not contribute at all. Needless to say, I rarely contributed another word to classroom discussions the rest of the year.

Although the negative experiences outnumbered the positive ones, a few teachers dared to reach out and try alternative reading approaches. If I had to pin point the exact moment that changed my identity as a learner, it was in senior English class. We were asked to read *A Brave New World*. I remember thinking, “this was science fiction! I know this style!” For some reason I made a comment about what I was truly thinking. I expected the teacher to discredit my comment but instead he stopped and said, “I hadn’t thought of that” and spent the remainder of the time just discussing other points of view. He was the first teacher that allowed for multiple viewpoints to enter the conversation. This teacher provided that “nanosecond” that “engage[d] the impassioned spirit of students” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 20). A similar experience shared with one of my participants, Jane.

Then, just a year later during my first semester at the university, I believe one of the most critical incidents occurred that made an impact on my future professional identity and pedagogical ownership for teaching reading. I had received a phone message from a professor of one of my classes (it should be noted that this class was in a large auditorium which served over a hundred students). Earlier in the semester we had been asked to complete a handwritten assignment on a topic. From this assignment, he noticed that although I had written to the topic well, there were indications of something that he would call dyslexia. This professor went on to explain that his wife worked at the University's learning lab and that I should visit her to discuss more on this concern. I followed through with my meeting at the learning lab, meet weekly for the rest of the semester and by the Spring it was as if I were a new academic person. I was amazed with what small adjustments to my reading and writing habits did to my self-confidence as a learner (things I still practice today). Although during that semester I was not an education major; by the end of my first year I had changed. My career as a reading teacher was set into motion and I found myself unconsciously looking at every lesson I created (regardless of subject content) through the lens of literacy. I wanted to unlock the door to reading for students the way it had been unlocked for me.

Like Marie in my study, I feared this assumed weakness becoming known by colleagues, but through the awareness and ownership of my understanding this assumed weakness became an identity forming agent. Having the same concerns as Rose and Marie, I did not want a single student to ever feel the way I felt as a reader and writer. I used this knowledge to make pedagogical decisions in my classroom. It is the reason why I sought to incorporate multiple methods of reading instruction, embraced holistic

philosophies for spelling and writing and created a social environment around literacy. Literacy, to me, was and still is an empowering tool. What resulted from my pedagogical decisions was a classroom motto that we “read to listen and write to be heard.”

During my novice years, I too had critical incidents like my participants that made an impact on my development such as unofficial mentors, consultants and professional training. These helped to ignite the thirst for developing my pedagogical content knowledge. Many of the items in my own memory box tell the story of the reading specialist from my second school assignment. She became a role model and it was her influence, confidence and guidance that led me down the path to become a reading specialist. Reminiscent of Jane’s experience, I was also influence by the Marie Carbo training. It was the first out-of-city conference that I attended. I felt professional and energized to come back to my classroom with such powerful new knowledge to assist students with their reading needs. Experiencing this professionalism during a conference was a similar sensation that both Marie and Angela expressed. From these trainings and suggestions from consultants, I began collecting and reading professional literature like *Mosaic of Thought* and *Guided Reading*. The books in my professional library became badges representing my professional growth as I became a researcher of my profession. Similar to all my participants, I felt a need and responsibility to learn about all the aspects of teaching such as acquiring a deeper understanding of child learning development, learning styles and reading methods. My life-stories with reading, both as a child and as a professional, shaped my identity as a reading teacher and my philosophy for teaching reading grew from my experiences.

During my doctoral studies, I began to build theory behind the correlation between my experiences and my passion for teaching reading. Some may hold the meaning of a reading curriculum to be an acquisition of skills. I have learned through my experiences that by holding this meaning of reading, teachers inadvertently relay a message that reading is one dimensional with little depth and complexity. I now own the understanding that if teachers represent reading to include the critical aspects of making judgments relating to how the selection helps to identify who the reader is (or who they are not); use selections to help uncover the world that the reader lives in; or use selections to judge characterization based on social ethics of today, thus developing opinions about how the reader fits into society – we as reading teachers make the act of reading become three dimensional with many personal attributes attached to the selection. Alice would also agree with developing such a critical approach to literacy.

I connected to phenomenology because it provided validation for the way that I encountered literacy and learning. I also connected to critical pedagogy because through reflection, I could see those elements sprinkled throughout my fourteen years of teaching reading. I used literacy as a change agent for my professional development and formed my own classroom democracies around this theory. In return, it helped me guide my students to use literacy as a tool to better understand themselves and the world around them. What started as personal curiosity grew into a professional exploration as I wondered if sharing life-stories could reveal the awareness of how critical this understanding is for development of teachers, specifically for novice reading teachers. I found myself asking: Were my stories unique? Do other reading teachers use their personal experiences and life-stories to guide pedagogy? Could this awareness of

positive and negative critical incidents be a crucial element in developing passionate reading teachers?

Again, like my participants, as a novice reading teacher I was unaware of the conceptual understanding of teaching theories but I was confident in the use of praxis-like actions to validate the teaching and learning environment I created for my students. Personally, this phenomenological research project fulfilled my quest by helping me to create concrete theory for my own development and that my belief in the power of our life-stories is not unique, at least not for five other reading teachers.

During the past two years that I have been conducting this research, it has made an impact on my persona as an educator of novice teachers. I now begin each semester sharing with my students the initial fears and insecurities I had about beginning to teach, as well as how my awareness to my critical incidents brought change to my teaching of reading. Since I began sharing; each semester, one to two preservice teachers confidentially share with me their life-stories of reading and writing difficulties and the secret fears they have for teaching. Knowing that I had these same fears and how I used them positively gave them comfort and courage.

As I draw an end to my research on novice reading teachers, I will continue to make an honest effort to use what I have learned from my five participants as a transparent platform for assisting reading teachers both pre- and inservice. Reading teachers *should* study their literacy biographies and become knowledgeable of the platforms or levels of development they will encounter during their teaching career. They *should* know that having this awareness can be used to validate their own personal

growth. The implications that this research has on my own teaching and learning is that of goal forming to expose this knowledge to reading professionals of all levels and to continue through future research to promote the power our personal experiences has for teaching reading.

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Appendix A

Participant Flyer



The purpose of this project is to learn more about the experiences that reading teachers have had during their first few years of being a teacher!

- Are you a reading teacher? Are you beginning your fourth or fifth year of teaching?
- Would you be willing to share your stories about teaching reading?
- Are you wanting to make a difference for future beginning reading teachers?

Your experiences are valuable and they matter!

Interested and want to find out more?

What will you do?

- Most things you can do on your own time, like:
 - Mini-journaling about your experiences to create a biography of your reading teaching influences
 - Creating a memory box of objects that will help tell your stories of teaching reading these past few years. These can be (but are not limited to) lesson plans, photos, student work or books.

When will this happen?

- We will begin November 2010
- We will have three main meetings:
 - End of November,
 - Late- January,
 - Mid-spring semester (March or April) for a summarative interview
- At your convenience, mini-visits will be scheduled purely for checking-in on things.

What will you get from this experiences?

- The possible benefits of participation include an opportunity to delve deeper into your teaching style and philosophies by becoming a co-researcher throughout the project.
- You will also be helping to provide a foundation for new teachers that wish to become a reading teacher or provide guidance for struggling teachers that wish to enhance their teaching of reading.

Contact: Patricia Durham

Phone: 361-523-9890

E-mail: patricia.durham71@gmail.com



This is a doctoral dissertation research study through the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi College of Education to meet the requirements for the degree of Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Reading Instruction.

Appendix B

Memory Box Instruction/Demonstration

Memory Box Collection

The purpose of this project is to have you collect artifacts (objects) that exemplify your teaching and allow for you to share your stories of teaching reading.

Within this box, you may place anything that gives meaning and identity to you as a reading teacher such as lesson plans, photos, student work, workshop participation, correspondence from individuals, or books. These can be direct examples of the memory, or they can be triggers for people/place/things within the memory.

At the end of the time period for collection, we will meet to have a conversation about the items (i.e., stories) in your box. The conversations will be recorded.

Date we will meet to have these conversations: _____

Place: _____ Time: _____



Appendix C

Literacy Genealogy Tree Instrument

Experiences from the Past

A Genealogy of a Reading Teacher: The roots, branches, and fruit of a beginning career

This project has three main parts:

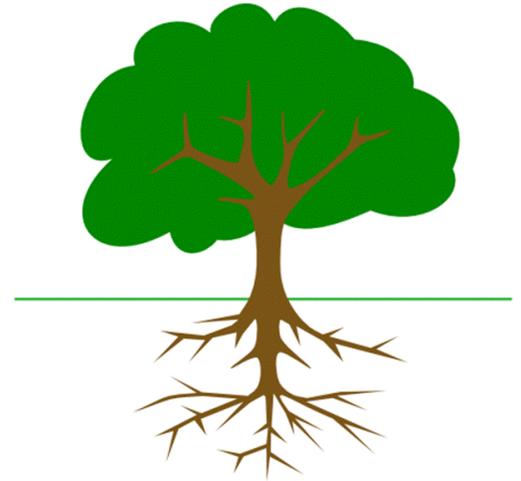
The Roots **Branches** **Fruit**

For the first section, you will think back to before you became a teacher--the roots of your reading teacher heritage. What were some experiences (this may include people, places, and things) that impacted your path towards education? These can be either positive or negative experiences and they do not have to relate to teaching specifically.

The second section will allow you to chronicle influences that have made a difference to your teaching style (pedagogy) and teacher identity. These have been the branches that have provided support during your first years of teaching. They can include the same type of experiences such as people, places or things that have guided you during your first four to five years of teaching. You might think of workshops, reading material, or trainers.

The final section asks you to think into the future and to describe how you see yourself in the next five years. What fruit from your labor will you novice year's bear? What does this teacher look like, act like, feel like and do as a teacher of reading?

You will have roughly three weeks to complete this project (a week per section). I would like to remind you to please routinely save to this USB memory drive. There will be reminders after each entry. The USB memory drive is only identifiable by the participation number you were assigned at the



initial meeting. When you have completed the tasks, please contact me and send them via email attachment.

If at any time you have questions or concerns, please contact me at:

Patricia Durham
361-523-9890
Patricia.durham71@gmail.com

TIPS for journaling: If you are not use to journaling, you might try the following 10 minute exercises to help create rich, deep descriptions:

Day 1) Begin by very quickly writing the “who, what, when, and where” your experience took place. Try not to push your memory or force the writing. This should be the basics of the experience. Write until you can no longer add information with ease.

Day 2) Go back to your Day1 entry. Reread your first posting. Close your eyes and try to envision what your surroundings might have been like (what you see and hear). If you do not know for sure, imagine what it could have looked like. Add this to your posting. Write until you can no longer add information with ease.

Day 3) Go back to your Day 2 entry. Reread your posting. Close your eyes and try to think about your emotional connections to this experience. What were the effects from this either positive or negative? Explain until you can no longer add information with ease.

Your entries have been set to be double spaced at 14pt font. Please remember to save often.

The Roots

(Three files were provided on the USB for opportunities to journal about 1, 2 or 3 moments)

It is not necessary to complete all three area of the pre-experience if you are not able. If you find that you have more than the three, select the most influential experiences. Please click the approximate date of occurrence and the type of experience.

The core of the content is what is being explored. You can decide the length you feel is appropriate for giving a good recounting of your experience. The more thoughtful and detailed you are - the more I am able to understand your experience. Please relax and reflect to the best of your ability.

Pre-Experience/moment #1

Approximate time period (click on the circle to move the dot):

- Type of experience: positive negative
- pre/early elementary
 - upper elementary
 - junior high school
 - high school
 - college

CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE

TIPS for journaling: If you are not use to journaling, you might try the following 10 minute exercises to help create rich, deep descriptions:

Day 1) Begin by very quickly writing the “who, what, when, and where” your experience took place. Try not to push your memory or force the writing. This should be the basics of the experience. Write until you can no longer add information with ease.

Day 2) Go back to your Day1 entry. Reread your first posting. Close your eyes and try to envision what your surroundings might have been like (what you see and hear). If you do not know for sure, imagine what it could have looked like. Add this to your posting. Write until you can no longer add information with ease.

Day 3) Go back to your Day 2 entry. Reread your posting. Close your eyes and try to think about your emotional connections to this experience. What were the effects from this either positive or negative? Explain until you can no longer add information with ease.

CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE

Please describe to the best of your ability the experience you have selected. Include the essentials... who was involved, what was the experience, where did this occur, when specifically and why is this a memorable experience. How has this moment brought meaning to your teaching of reading? It may be helpful to include feelings, connections, wonders, and revelations that resulted from this experience.

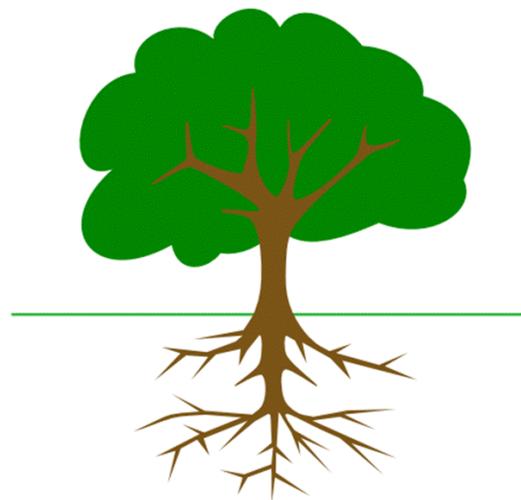
Please save your work often. Please do not rename the file or change settings.

Begin Here

The Branches

(Three files were provided on the USB for opportunities to journal about 1, 2 or 3 moments)

This second section will allow you to chronicle influences that have made a difference to your teaching style (pedagogy) and teacher identity. These have been the branches that have provided support during your first years of teaching. They can include the same type of experiences such as people, places or things that have guided you during your first four to five years of teaching.



It is not necessary to complete all three areas if you are not able. If you find that you have more than the three, select the most influential experiences. Please click on the year for each experience that you wish to reflect and indicate the type of experience. If your option is not available, please type that next to “other. **You may check all that apply.**

The core of the content is what is being explored. You can decide the length you feel is appropriate for giving a good recounting of your experience. The more thoughtful and detailed you are - the more I am able to understand your experience. Please relax and reflect to the best of your ability.

Teacher Influences/moment #1

Year this occurred: [click here](#) for drop down

CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE

Type of Influence (check all that apply): Workshop in district Workshop out of district Professional Literature Campus Colleague District Colleague Professional Colleague Student Family Member Other: Specify

TIPS for journaling: If you are not use to journaling, you might try the following 10 minute exercises to help create rich, deep descriptions:

Day 1) Begin by very quickly writing the “who, what, when, and where” your experience took place. Try not to push your memory or force the writing. This should be the basics of the experience. Write until you can no longer add information with ease.

Day 2) Go back to your Day1 entry. Reread your first posting. Close your eyes and try to envision what your surroundings might have been like (what you see and hear). If you do not know for sure, imagine what it could have looked like. Add this to your posting. Write until you can no longer add information with ease.

Day 3) Go back to your Day 2 entry. Reread your posting. Close your eyes and try to think about your emotional connections to this experience. What were the effects from this either positive or negative? Explain until you can no longer add information with ease.

CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE

Please describe to the best of your ability the experience you have selected. Include the essentials... who was involved, what was the experience, where did this occur; when specifically and why is this a memorable experience. How has this moment brought meaning to your teaching of reading? It may be helpful to include feelings, connections, wonders, and revelations that resulted from this experience.

Please save your work often. Please do not rename the file or change settings.

Begin here:



The Fruit

This final section asks you to think into the future and to describe how you see yourself in the next five years. What will the fruit from the labor of being a novice reading teacher be? What does this teacher look like, act like, feel like and do as a teacher of reading as a result of your novice experiences? Speak to your teaching style and expectation for yourself.

The core of the content is what is being explored. You can decide the length you feel is appropriate for giving a good recounting of your experience. The more thoughtful and detailed you are - the more I am able to understand your experience. Please relax and reflect to the best of your ability.

Please describe the future “you” to the best of your ability. Include the essentials... who will be involved, what experiences to you hope to have, where might these occur? How have the past moment brought meaning to your future as a teaching of reading?

Please save your work

Thank you for sharing your valuable memories.

Begin here

Appendix D

Consent Form

CONSENT FORM**Constructing Voices through Lived-Experiences: A Phenomenological Study of Novice Reading Educators' Personal Understandings of Pedagogical Ownership and Professional Identity****Introduction**

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. If you decide to participate in this study, this form will also be used to record your consent.

You have been asked to participate in a research project studying novice reading educator's personal understanding of pedagogical ownership and professional identity. The purpose of this study is to learn from the experiences of novice literacy educators so that this understanding of growth and development can be used to improve professional trainings as well as assist other novice literacy educators in the shaping of their identities. You were selected to be a possible participant because you are a novice reading educators having taught for four or five years.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a literacy genealogy journal that will become your biography of becoming a reading teacher, collect artifacts (objects) from your teaching experiences that you consider to be representations of your reading instruction and participate in an indepth interview. This study will initially take roughly twelve weeks to collect data where we will meet several times throughout this period (not including school holidays). We will meet only at your convenience. Once data is gathered for all three sources, a final meeting will be arranged to discuss findings of the completed research which will be planned for the middle of the spring semester 2011.

Our first meeting will be in early November 2010 when I will explain about the first project. You will have three weeks to complete the Literacy Genealogy project which is a journaling activity. This will be something that you will do on your own time and send it to me via email or I will come and pick it up at your convenience. During the first official meeting, I will explain the second activity (the Memory Box) so that you can be gathering items for the project. For this you will collect items that exemplify your teaching of reading. These can be (but are not limited to) lesson plans, photos, student work or books. In late- November 2010 we will meet to have a conversation about your memory box of classroom artifacts. This meeting may take up to an hour and a half. For each of the first projects, we will meet briefly after I have analyzed the conversations at which time you will have an opportunity to agree, disagree or

add to the information. I will also ask to visit you in between these events for quick checking-in opportunities.

Within a six weeks period from the memory box conversations (late-January 2011), we will meet once more for an indepth interview that will continue the discussion from your genealogy tree and memory box. This meeting will also take up to an hour and a half. As mentioned previously, when all data has been analyzed, we will meet to discuss the results which should occur in March or April of 2011 and will take an hour and a half. Between these times, we will meet to discuss progress and on-going interpretations of the projects. These meeting times will last no more than thirty minutes and will always be at your convenience. Each of our meeting times will be voice recorded and possibly videotaped to help me keep accurate records of our conversations.

What are the risks involved in this study?

The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

The possible benefits of participation include an opportunity to delve deeper into your teaching style and philosophies by becoming a co-researcher throughout the project. You will also be helping to provide a foundation for new teachers that wish to become a reading teacher or guidance for struggling teachers that wish to enhance their pedagogy.

Do I have to participate?

No. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi being affected.

Will I be compensated?

You will not be paid for your time, but I will provide refreshments during our meetings as well as any materials that you might need to complete an activity.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely viewable to myself and my transcribing helper. Any recordings will be kept for two years and then erased.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Patricia Durham, 361-523-9890, or at patricia.durham71@gmail.com

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?

This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. For research-related problems or questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact Erin Sherman, Interim Compliance Officer, at (361) 825-2497 or erin.sherman@tamucc.edu

Signature

Please be sure you have read the above information, asked questions and received answers to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of the consent form for your records. By signing this document, you consent to participate in this study. You also certify that you are 18 years of age or older by signing this form.

**Only include the following if recording is optional:*

_____ I agree to be audio [/video] recorded.

_____ I do not want to be audio [/video] recorded.

Signature of Participant: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name: _____

APPENDIX E

Participants' artifacts for Memory Box.

Figure 1: Alice's artifacts for the memory box.

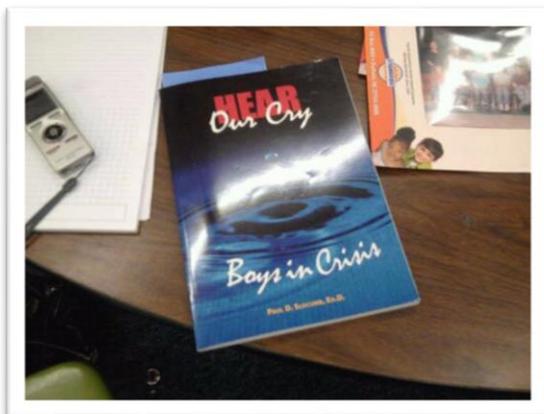
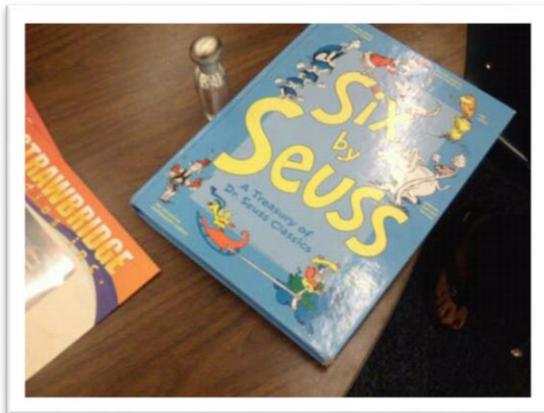


Figure 2: Rose's artifacts for the memory box.

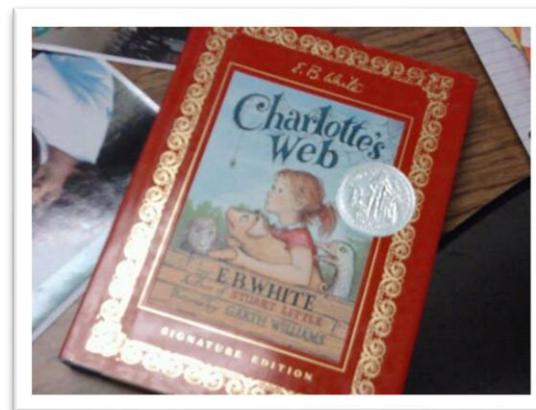
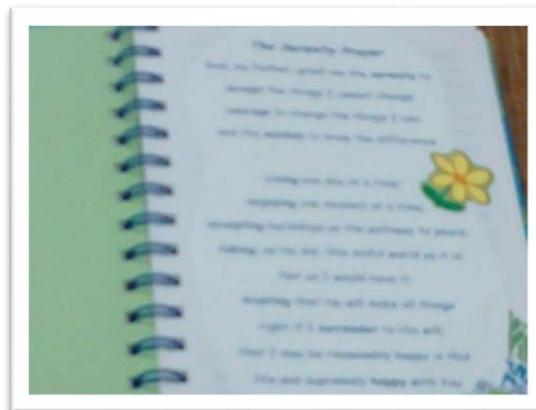
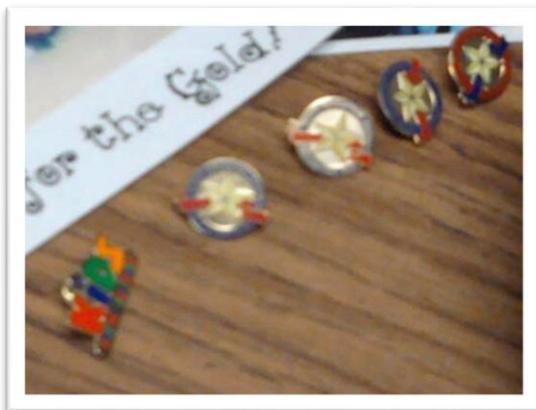


Figure 3: Angela's artifacts for the memory box.

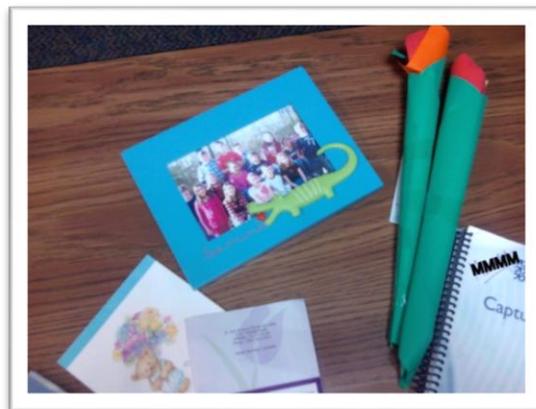
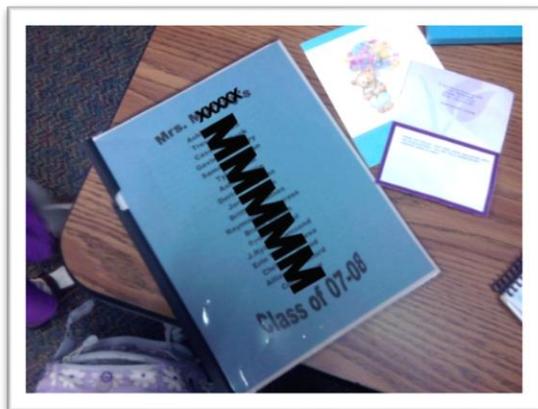
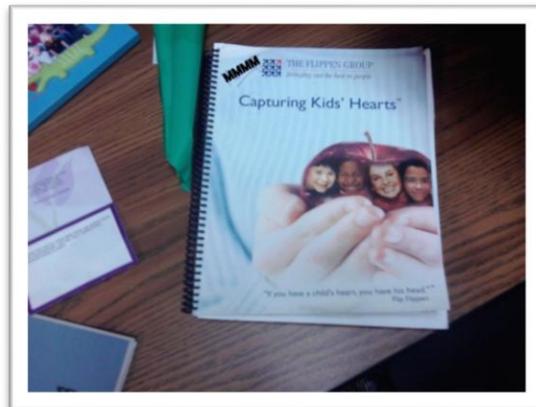


Figure 4: Jane's artifacts for the memory box.

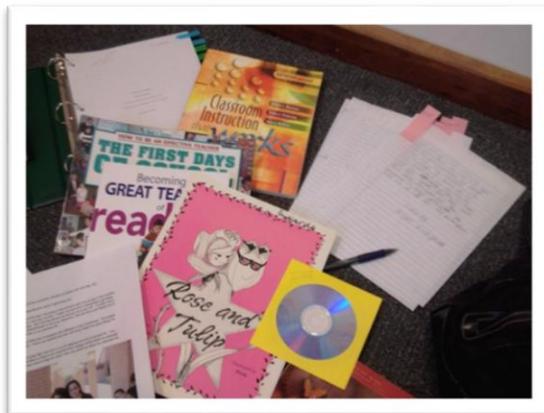
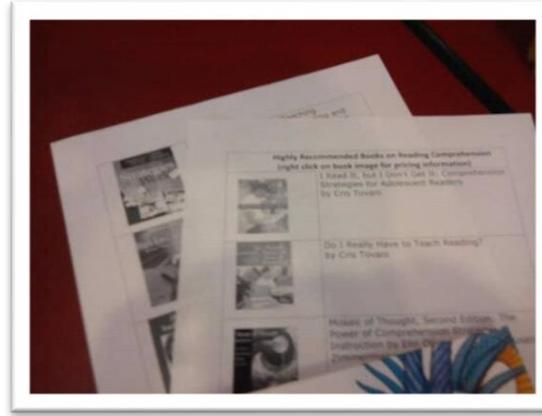
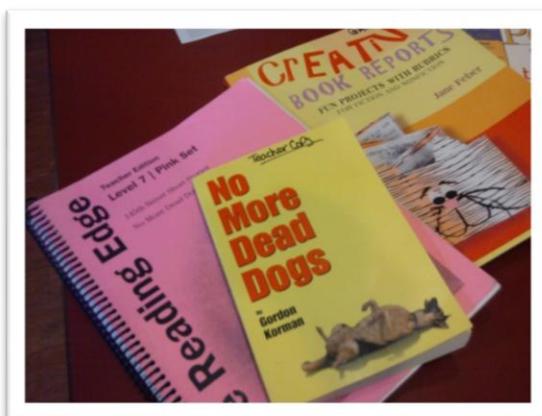
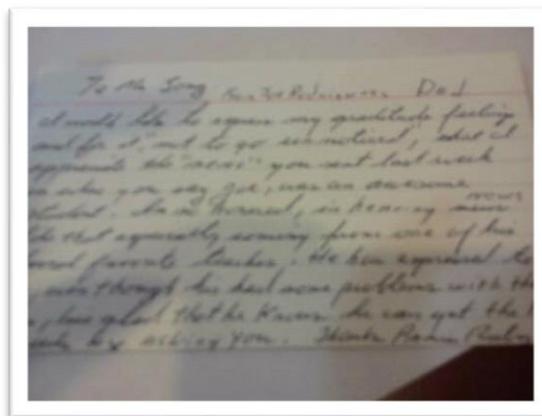


Figure 5: Marie's artifacts for the memory box.



Appendix F

Final Interview Questions.

1. Reflecting on the past years, in your own words, please describe what it has been like being a novice reading teacher.
2. In your memory box conversation and your journaling project, you mentioned several experiences that have been meaningful to you –looking back, what would you say was a moment or moments that you are most proud of as you have developed into a reading teacher, or maybe surprised at?
3. Reflecting again, how would you say these moments have affected your teaching of reading?
4. How have you grown as a reading teacher –what changes have you seen yourself go through during your novice years?
5. How do you become aware or how do you realize when you have understood something about teaching reading? And when you might need more development to improve on teaching reading?
6. Describe a moment when you became aware of reading instruction approaches that stood out –for good or bad? What were your thoughts or feeling after it happened?
7. If we opened the dictionary to “reading teacher” and your name was next to it –what would it say about you as a reading teacher?
8. How have you understood your professional side of teaching? What things have occurred or that you did that gave you that professional identity?
9. Have you shared all that has been significant about your novice years of teaching reading?
10. Looking back over these past months that you have been working on these projects – could you describe how the experience of participating in this research project has impacted who you are as a reading teacher?

Appendix G

*Demographic survey.***Demographic Survey**

Please tell me about yourself and your school.

Participant: **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6**

1. Gender: (Select one)

 Male Female

2. Year of Birth: (Please write in) _____

3. Ethnicity and race: (Select one)

- Caucasian
 Black
 American Indian
 Alaskan Native
 Hispanic
 Asian
 Pacific Islander
 Other

4. Completed total number of years employed as a fulltime certified teacher:

(Select one)

- 4 years
 5 years
 6 years
 Other: (specify) _____

5. This is my ____ year at my current school. (Select one)

- 1st
 2nd
 3rd
 4th
 5th

6. How many years have you been responsible for teaching Reading curriculum?
(Select one)

- 1 year
 2 years
 3 years

4 years 5 years 6 years

7. My school is configured by the following grades: (Select one)

 K-6 K-5 3-6 6-8 other

Any specialties of your school? _____

8. Education: Please check any of the following that apply to indicate the level of education you have completed: (Select all that apply)

 BA/BS Field(s): _____ Alternative Certification/Licensure MA/MS Field(s): _____

9. My school has a total average enrollment of: (check one)

 Less than 500 students 500-999 students 1,000 – 1,499 students 1,500 – 1,999 students 2,000 – 2,499 students 2,500 students or more

10. The approximate percentage of students with free and reduced lunch status in my district is ____%.

11. The approximate percentage of students with free and reduced lunch status in my school is ____%.

Thank you for completing this survey for me. I appreciate the time you have given for my project.

Appendix H

Table
Specific participant demographics

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Teaching demographics</i>
Alice	<p>Hispanic/Black</p> <p>Undergraduate Teacher Education program</p> <p>Master in Reading Instruction</p> <p>Ended 5th year teaching</p> <p>South Texas/ large school district/ grade 3/ departmentalized</p> <p>School population: 515/96% free/reduced lunch</p>
Rose	<p>Hispanic</p> <p>Undergraduate Keyboard pedagogy</p> <p>Masters in Special Education</p> <p>Alternative Teacher Certification program</p> <p>Ending 4th year teaching/ 11 in school setting</p> <p>South Texas/large school district/ grade 3/ Fine Arts Academy/ departmentalized</p> <p>School population: 453/63% free/reduced lunch</p>
Angela	<p>Caucasian</p> <p>Undergraduate Business/Marketing</p> <p>Alternative Teacher Certification program</p> <p>Ending 4th year teaching</p> <p>East Texas/ large school district/ grade 5/ departmentalized</p> <p>School population: 854/ 33% free /reduced lunch</p>

Table (continued)

Participant	Teaching demographics
Jane	<p data-bbox="789 449 878 478">Hispanic</p> <p data-bbox="789 506 1101 535">Undergraduate Political Science</p> <p data-bbox="789 562 1471 642">Masters in Education/ Curriculum and Instruction/ Alternative Teacher Certification program</p> <p data-bbox="789 669 1321 699">Ending 5th year teaching (not including internship year)</p> <p data-bbox="789 726 1349 756">South Texas/ small school district/ grade 4/ self-contained</p> <p data-bbox="789 783 1263 812">Student population: 375/ 73% free/reduced lunch</p>
Marie	<p data-bbox="789 890 889 919">Caucasian</p> <p data-bbox="789 947 1247 976">Undergraduate Marketing and Communications</p> <p data-bbox="789 1003 1403 1083">Undergraduate Teacher Education program/Alternative Teacher Certification program</p> <p data-bbox="789 1110 1024 1140">Ending 4th year teaching</p> <p data-bbox="789 1167 1414 1197">West Texas/small rural school district/ grade 6/ departmentalized</p> <p data-bbox="789 1224 1243 1253">School population: 70/ 64% free/reduced lunch</p>